THE MIRACLE AT MARKHAM

HOW TWELVE CHURCHES BECAME ONE

CHARLES M. SHELDON

H. S.

To "Fred." with all good wishes.

From Sarah.

Dec. 8th 99.

THE MIRACLE AT MARKHAM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

IN HIS STEPS: "What would Jesus do?"

THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHILLIP STRONG.

HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER; or, Christian Stewardship.

THE TWENTIETH DOOR.

RICHARD BRUCE; or, The Life that now is.

MALCOLM KIRK, and ROBERT HARDY'S SEVEN DAYS.
In One Volume.

THE REDEMPTION OF FREETOWN.

Each Volume in Crown 8vo, about 320 pages,
Paper Covers, 6d.; Cloth Boards, 1s.; Cloth, gilt lettered, gilt top, 1s. 6d.

LONDON:
CHARLES H. KELLY, 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.;
AND 26, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

THE MIRACLE AT MARKHAM

How Twelve Churches Became One

BY

CHARLES M. SHELDON

AUTHOR OF

"IN HIS STEPS" "THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHILLIP STRONG"

"ROBERT HARDY'S SEVEN DAYS" ETC.

COPYRIGHT

London:

CHARLES H. KELLY

2, CASTLE ST., CITY RD.; AND 26, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1899

Entered at Stationers' Hall

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	A LETTER WHICH BROKE TWO HEARTS	7
II.	A CONVERSATION IN THE KITCHEN	20
III.	DEAN RANDALL RECEIVES A LETTER	28
IV.	WILLIAM LEAVES ANDOVER	38
V.	THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY	50
VI.	AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BISHOP	62
VII.	WILLIAM HEARS A SERMON	72
VIII.	JOHN PROCTER'S PROPOSITION	83
IX.	AT WORK IN THE MILL	96
X.	THE MESSAGE OF "THE PYRAMID MINER"	108
XI.	"ACCORDING TO THE MASTER'S COMMANDS"	119
XII.	A BROKEN HEART	129
XIII.	THE DEAN'S CONFESSION	138
XIV.	A UNITED PLAN OF CAMPAIGN	148
XV.	BACK TO MARKHAM	156
XVI.	AN INTERVIEW WITH FATHER MORRIS	168
XVII.	A MESSAGE FOR JANE	179
XVIII.	"THE MARKHAM PLAN"	188
XIX.	"WHAT THE KING SAID"	200

CHAP.		PAGE
XX.	THE PROFESSOR VISITS PYRAMID . . .	211
XXI.	THE PROFESSOR VISITS THE MILL . . .	222
XXII.	"THE MARKHAM UNION"	230
XXIII.	TRUE CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY	238
XXIV.	A CHRISTMAS WEDDING	251

THE MIRACLE AT MARKHAM

CHAPTER I.

A LETTER WHICH BROKE TWO HEARTS.

"WELL, John," said the minister's wife, coming suddenly into the study a few minutes after the postman had left the parsonage, "what does William write? I saw his letter. Please read it to me."

The Rev. John Procter, pastor of the Congregational Church in Markham, hesitated as he turned towards his wife with a letter in his hand. The hand trembled a little, a very unusual thing with John Procter. His wife noticed it.

"What is the matter?" she asked, her voice betraying some anxiety. "Is he — is anything wrong?"

"It's a serious matter, Kate," said John Procter gravely. "Don't be alarmed," he continued, as his wife made a gesture of fear. "Personally, William is not in any danger. But you must be prepared for unexpected news."

"I am ready to hear it," said the minister's wife,

but her voice trembled, and she looked at her husband anxiously.

The Rev. John Procter opened out the letter, but he hesitated again before reading it. There was a curious mingling of sadness and anger in his voice and manner when finally he read the letter aloud:—

ANDOVER, MASS., *Sept.* 10, 1897.

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—I am about to write you a letter that will cause you pain. I am well aware of that fact, and yet I have thought the entire matter out prayerfully, and I cannot avoid the result, much as I know it will cause you very great sorrow. To tell you at once what my news is, I will say I have definitely decided to leave the Seminary and give up my preparations for the ministry.

Mrs. Procter gave an exclamation of surprise, and the minister paused a moment and looked at her. The faces of both of them were pale and agitated.

"Go on, John," said Mrs. Procter finally. But she sat during the rest of the reading with her head bowed. Once, a tear rolled over her cheek.

Of course, you will expect me to give my reasons for this great change in my plans. You know that during the summer I have been supplying the pulpit at Granby. I have written you something of my experience there, but I have not told you anything of my real experience. Granby is a town of three thousand people and eight churches, not counting the Catholic. The Congregational Church, which I supplied for three months and a half, had seventy-two members, nominally. They have had six pastors in twelve years. At present they are being served by supplies. They pay twelve hundred dollars and parsonage. I learned after I had been there two months, that

the church committee receives twenty-five or thirty applications a month from ministers who would like to candidate for the place.

It would be impossible for me to tell you in a letter all my experience while in Granby, which has led up to my present resolve to leave the ministry for ever. From the day I entered the Seminary, up to the present time, when I begin the Senior year, I have felt an increasing conviction that the ministry contained less and less that appealed to me even on the side of service. As much as I reverence your life, dear father, I have come to feel that as the churches now are, separated and weakened by their foolish denominational pride, there is almost nothing in the ministry to attract a man who really wants to serve the world.

In Granby, as I have said, there are eight churches to three thousand people: the Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Free-Will Baptist, Lutheran, Christian, and Methodist.

These all have separate church buildings and ministers. Besides these, the Christian Science people have meetings in a hall, and the United Brethren hold services every other week in the district schoolhouse near the railroad shops. All of these churches are in debt, and all but two are behind with salaries.

The impression which grew with every minute of my summer's work in Granby, was one that made me feel that I could not honestly go on with my studies for the ministry. In fact, dear father and mother, I have lost my respect for the ministry as a profession, and for the churches as organisations for doing Christian work. You do not know what it costs me to write this. I know something, if not all, of the pain it gives you. You have always thought of me as a minister. It is not the least painful thought to me that out of father's hard-earned savings I have, for the last eight years, been sent to academy, college, and Seminary, to be educated for a profession I now am obliged to confess I cannot enter, because I have grown to despise it. Dear father, believe me, nothing but a feeling of profound conviction could make such a con-

fession possible. But you have brought me up to tell the truth and be true to convictions, no matter what the cost. And I am compelled to confess that the condition of the churches, the fickleness and instability of the minister's position, the unchristian division and sectarianism of the denominations, have produced in me such a distaste and unfitness for the ministry, that I must leave the Seminary, and give up the life that you and mother have so fondly planned for me these many years.

I do not know yet what I shall do. I am not fitted to teach, and all my school-life has not taught me anything that I can turn to account in the struggle for a living. I have often wished, this year, that I had learned a trade before coming away from home to school. I am perfectly well physically, and, if necessary, I can go out to work as a day labourer. In any case, father, I do not wish you to send me any more money. If you do, I shall return it. I can take care of myself, somehow. You know, that with all I have said, I have not lost my Christian faith. My experience has not shaken that. The only thing is, I must hereafter exercise it somewhere else besides in the ministry. Give much love to Jane, and believe me, always, your loving son, WILLIAM.

ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

There was a long silence in the little study. The Rev. John Procter could not conceal from his wife the deep disappointment caused by his son's confession. In memory, he rapidly traced the hopes and ambitions he had felt for this son's career. It had been the anticipation of his own ministry to see his son in a pulpit, and hear him preach an eloquent sermon some day in his father's own church. It seemed to him like treason, like filial disobedience, now, that this son had turned his face against the ministry and the church.

There were many things in the letter that wounded him deeply. The loss of the money saved by painful economy, to pay William's school bills, was the least part of his disappointment. It was the thought of his desertion from the profession that pained, and even angered, the Rev. John Procter for a moment.

Mrs. Procter finally spoke. "What do you think, John? Has he good reasons for such a step?" She asked the question, not knowing what to say first. There was no feeling of anger with her. The uppermost feeling was one of grief. She had never thought of her son as being anything but a minister.

John Procter was silent a moment. The question his wife had asked him was one he could not honestly answer at the moment. The asking of it angered him. After all, at best, ministers are men of like passions with their parishioners.

"He is not old enough to decide such great questions so hastily," said John Procter sharply.

Mrs. Procter was silent for a moment.

"At least we must respect William's honest convictions," she said softly and with some pride. "He must be true to them."

"Even if he is false to us!" said the minister bitterly.

"You did not mean that, did you, John?" asked his wife, laying her hand on his arm.

"I said it, if I did not mean it," he replied. "William has deceived us. He should not have gone on all these years pretending——"

"John, you cannot believe that!' cried his wife, rising and coming up close to him.

"At least, his decision is——"

"John, anything but loss of love and respect for our boy. It is a deep disappointment to us, but let us give him the benefit of his convictions."

John Procter suddenly looked up fairly into his wife's face. His look changed.

"I spoke hastily," he said, with a sad smile. "Let us take time to think it over. Only," he added with emphasis, "I wish this news had come later in the week. I am not in a very good frame of mind to write my sermons after this!"

"Mother, mother!" cried a voice from the kitchen, "please help me with this recipe, won't you?"

"Yes, Jane," said Mrs. Procter; "I'll be there in a moment."

The minister's wife looked up at him. The tears were in her eyes. He stooped and kissed her, and neither said a word. Each knew that for them both a rare disappointment had come into their lives, a disappointment that could not be talked about, but must always be a part of memory.

When his wife had gone out of his study, John Procter turned about to his writing-desk and picked up his pen. He sat with it in his hand for a minute, but he could not think of anything to write.

Suddenly, he threw his pen down, and rose and walked over to his window. From where he stood, he could see the main street of Markham, and count five church steeples.

He stood by the window for several minutes, and

something almost like a sneer grew on his face. The sneer passed away, but another look took its place, a look of scorn and of sad disgust.

"Is William right about it, after all?" He asked the question aloud, and, walking away from the window, he paced his study, talking to himself.

"Here, in Markham, we have twelve churches to twenty-eight hundred people. We beat Granby by four churches. In the language of the real estate agent's circular which booms his Western town, 'every denomination is represented, so that everybody's religious preferences may be gratified.' Let me see. This is the religious census of Markham."

John Procter walked over to his desk and sat down. He drew a large sheet of paper towards him, and put down the following:—

"THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS AT PRESENT ORGANISED IN THE TOWN OF MARKHAM.

Congregational.	Christian.
Baptist.	Episcopal.
Methodist.	Free-Will Baptist.
Presbyterian.	United Presbyterian.
Lutheran.	Cumberland Presbyterian.
Adventist.	Reformed Presbyterian.

"Add to these, Christian Science, Church of God, Free Methodist, United Brethren, Salvation Army, American Volunteers, and Roman Catholic.

"Seven of these denominations have their buildings on the same street within a few blocks of one another. This street is the best street in town. There is only one church building in the factory district. Nine of these twelve churches are, to my positive knowledge,

in debt, six of them with mortgages on their property. The average salary paid the ministers is less than one thousand dollars. With all these churches, we have a town with fifteen saloons, a notoriously corrupt town council, the mayor of which is the largest property-owner in the saloons, and an increasing population of factory workers whose children run the streets and recruit the criminal classes. Our Sunday laws in Markham are contemptuously disregarded, baseball and athletic sports make the Lord's Day a mockery, and drunkenness and vice are common."

The Rev. John Procter lifted his pen from the paper where he had written, and paused a moment. Then he added—

"Markham is well churched;

"But where is Christ?"

He threw his pen down, and rose and walked over to the window again, leaving the sheet of paper over the leaves of his partly written sermon.

"William is right about it, after all," he said at last. "How much is there in the ministry to attract a young man with Christian ambitions, who really is eager to serve his fellow-man? How much influence do these twelve churches have in Markham? How much attention do the politicians pay to any church, for example, when it comes to a town, county, or state election? We are struggling as a denomination to hold our own against the other sects. What strength have we left to do the Lord's real work that cries aloud to be done? I don't blame you, William; I——"

Rev. John Procter walked away from the window again, and sat down at his desk. The look on his face had changed again. Since his son's letter and the feeling provoked by it, he had grown visibly older. The lines in his really strong face had deepened, the care in his eyes had grown more defined. After all these years, how had Christ's prayer been answered? Were His disciples one? Could they ever be made one? His thought finally narrowed to Markham. Was it possible for them to be made one? Could Christ ever be made the real Master of these divided bodies?

The Rev. John Procter drew another sheet of paper towards him, and after a little hesitation he wrote the following:—

"POSSIBILITIES OF UNITING THE TWELVE DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS IN MARKHAM.

THE MINISTERS.

"1. Baptist—Rev. Charles Harris, pastor. A man without a college or Seminary training, who always lays great stress on baptism by immersion, and frequently preaches from the topic, 'Why am I a Baptist?' A good man, but very narrow. Has drawn away his young people from the Christian Endeavour Society, and formed a separate Baptist Union, which refuses to take part in Christian work with other young people's societies. Strictly close communion.

"2. Methodist—Rev. Lawrence Brown, pastor. A conscientious, hard-working man, with a large family.

Has protracted meetings every winter, and without meaning to be discourteous has begun meetings in a private house near a district where the Presbyterians already had established a mission Sunday school. The neighbourhood is divided, and already a quarrel has arisen as to the use of the schoolhouse for religious services. Has an Epworth League, which does not work with the Endeavour Societies.

"3. Presbyterian—Rev. Hugh Cameron, D.D., pastor. A scholarly, refined man, who preaches from manuscript. Has best library in Markham. Has refused to speak to the factory people in an outdoor Sunday evening service, because he cannot speak extemporaneously. A small membership.

"4. Lutheran—Rev. James Wakefield, pastor. An average minister, with no particular habits to distinguish him. Complaints frequent in his church that his sermons are dull and his prayers long.

"5. Christian—Rev. Frank Russell, pastor. Very sensational. Has lantern services, Sunday evening religious concerts, and other attractions to secure a crowd. Has been repeatedly charged with being a proselyte, drawing the congregations from other churches to his Sunday evening services.

"6. Episcopal—the Very Rev. Dean Randall. A man, in his private life, of great social attractions. Well read, and friendly in his relations to the other ministers. Never was known to take any public part in temperance meetings or any public effort for the good of the town. A very firm believer in the Apostolic Succession. Would possibly preach in a Congregational or Presbyterian pulpit, but would

never invite a minister of either of those denominations into his pulpit.

"7. Free-Will Baptist—Rev. Alfred Towne, pastor. An old man, with very determined views on doctrinal questions. Has a very small congregation, is poor, and not able to preach continuously, owing to ill-health.

"8. United Presbyterian—Rev. Edward Lathrop, pastor. A young man. Very conceited and fond of controversy. Has been charged with heresy. Preaches doctrinal sermons against imaginary opponents. Has a good voice, and is unusually good-looking.

"9. Cumberland Presbyterian — Rev. Paul Ford, pastor. Has built up a small congregation from a few church members who drew off from a large body in a neighbouring town in a quarrel. A man of quick temper, jealous, but willing to work among the poor and sinful. A man of naturally brilliant abilities.

"10. Reformed Presbyterian—Rev. Walter Carter, pastor. Middle-aged man, who is fearless in his denunciations of the saloon and other evils. Never votes, and takes no part in political movements. Very pleasant man in private life. A good talker.

"11. Adventist — Rev. William Powers, pastor. Uneducated; poorly equipped for the ministry. Always preaching his church doctrines.

"12. Congregational — Rev. John Procter, pastor. Graduate of academy, college, and Seminary. Unduly proud of that fact. A man of strong passions, who thinks all the other churches ought to be Congrega-

tional in order to be truly united. Fonder of reading than of making parish calls. Preaches generally from manuscript, and does not feel at his ease before a crowd of working people, though he is willing to face them and do the best he can. Is at present the oldest resident pastor in Markham, having lived there fifteen years."

John Procter smiled a little grimly while writing his own biography. Then he read what he had written about the other ministers, and after finishing, he slowly but carefully tore the sheets of paper in pieces and threw them into the wastepaper basket.

"I have no right to judge them," he said aloud. "I have no doubt they are all better, more Christian men than I am. And yet I believe I have fairly given their principal characteristics as ministers. Is there any power on earth that can unite such a body of men? What can ever bring together two such churches as the Baptist and Episcopal? Dean Randall and Harris are as opposite as any two men I ever saw. They are as likely to mix as oil and water. When I think of church union, the real kind, in Markham, I am obliged to think of a miracle. Would even a miracle unite such men and such churches? And yet we all claim to be alike Christian. Why are we not all doing Christian work together, as He prayed we might?"

He picked up his pen again and dipped it in the ink, and held it in his hand until the ink had dried. He rose and walked up and down, restless, and unable to throw off the questions he had asked. He re-read his son's letter, and the anger he had felt at

his first reading was now largely gone. Sadness, a deep sadness, born of the morning's experiences, filled his heart.

"If the churches ever really unite, it will be by a miracle," he said repeatedly. When Mrs. Procter gently knocked on his study door to announce dinner, John Procter was still sitting at his desk, but his head was bowed over the leaves of his unfinished sermon, and his spirit was faint within him as he thought of his son and of the Church of Christ in Markham.

CHAPTER II.

A CONVERSATION IN THE KITCHEN.

WHILE the Rev. John Procter that morning was having this experience in his study, his wife and daughter were having an interesting conversation in the kitchen.

Jane Procter was a graduate of the State normal school, and one of the teachers in the public schools of Markham. It was the last week of vacation, and she was spending the time at home, helping her mother with housework.

When her mother came into the kitchen, in answer to her call for help in the making a new dish for dinner, Jane Procter saw at once that something unusual had happened. She was as curious as most girls, but she did not ask any questions at first. After the dish was set in the oven, she said—

"What is the matter, mother?"

Mrs. Procter told her the contents of William's letter, adding, "Of course, your father and I cannot help feeling very much grieved by it. We have never thought of Will as anything else. Your father will take it harder than any one."

"Mother," said Jane, after a moment of silence, "I don't blame Will any. Isn't what he says about

the churches in Granby true of thousands of towns and cities all over the country? Why should Will be one more man to struggle after a little church and then struggle with it?"

"It is what his father and his before him have done," sighed Mrs. Procter. "It is the noblest profession there is."

"Except teaching, mother. The average church touches children once a week, but the school touches them five days a week."

Mrs. Procter did not reply.

"Don't you think, mother, that the ministry offers very little nowadays to a young man of any strong ambitions?"

"It is a life full of service," replied Mrs. Procter proudly.

"Yes, mother, but it is so full of wasted strength."

"I don't know about that. There is a good deal of wasted strength everywhere. But surely, Jane, you can't help feeling some sorrow at William's decision?"

"Frankly, mother, I don't feel a bit. I honour father and his work, of course, but it seems to me the life of a minister is not very desirable. Just look at the ministers in Markham. They——"

"Jane," said her mother, with a little of John Procter's decided tone, "you must not judge."

"I am not judging," said Jane calmly, picking up the rolling-pin and using it unconsciously to gesture with. "I was simply going to compare. But I won't even do that. I know this very well, mother: I shall never marry a minister."

"Has any one of them ever asked you to?" Mrs. Procter questioned.

Jane blushed, and some flour on her cheeks made her look very pretty as she did so. She began, in some confusion, to scrape the dough from the kneading-board, and did not answer her mother.

"Forgive me, Jane," she said, coming up and putting an arm about her. "Your mother is daily and hourly in need of the grace of God. I asked the question the first time in the wrong way, but I ask it again now as your loving mother."

Jane scraped away at the dough, until she scraped down into the wood. Finally she turned her head towards her mother and said slowly—

"You know that Francis Randall has asked me twice?"

"No, you forget, Jane, that I have never talked with you about this before. I might have suspected. But how was I to know? Your father and I have always believed in giving you all the freedom that we think a Christian girl ought to have."

"I ought to have told you. Francis asked me last winter. Just before going back to his church, after Christmas. I said No. He wrote me last spring again. I answered him the same."

Jane's voice had grown steadier now, but her face was still flushed, and she rose and nervously began putting away the baking things.

"Do you love him?" Mrs. Procter asked the question simply, just as Jane was going into the pantry.

"I'm afraid I do," answered Jane, after a pause, and her mother did not see the tear that dropped into a teacup before Jane placed it on the shelf.

"Why are you afraid you do?" asked Mrs. Procter, with a slight smile that quickly changed to a serious look.

"Because, because—mother, I have made up my mind never to marry a minister."

"But Dean Randall's son is a very fine young man," said Mrs. Procter cautiously.

"Yes, mother."

"He has a noble character."

"Yes, mother, I know it."

"He is very handsome."

"Indeed he is," murmured Jane, bending her head lower.

"And you say you love him?" Mrs. Procter repeated it gravely.

"I have never told him so," replied Jane softly, "and I never shall."

"Jane," said her mother, after a pause, during which Jane made an unnecessary clatter with some tin things, "if you do not marry the man you love, whom will you marry?"

"I'm going to remain single," said Jane, and her voice trembled a little as she said it. "I'm going to be just a plodding, patient school-ma'am as long as I live."

"You are twenty-three years old, and you must decide this great question, my dear, for yourself. But you have been taught not to despise the love of a good man, Jane. You would not respect Francis

Randall if he were to give up his profession of the ministry to please you?"

"I would despise him," said Jane promptly.

"And yet you say you love him, and nothing but the fact that he is a minister keeps you from marrying him?"

"I don't know that I love so very much after all," said Jane a little stubbornly. But her look contradicted her voice.

Mrs. Procter opened her lips to say something, but at that moment the bell rang, and she went to the front door. When she came back, Jane had gone upstairs, and the conversation was not renewed.

At dinner that day all three were absorbed in the events of the morning, but not much was said. When the meal was over, John Procter went out to do some parish work, and Jane, after helping in the work of the kitchen, went to her room again.

She sat down by a small table, and after a moment of hesitation, she opened a drawer and took out of it a letter and a photograph. She set the photograph up against a pile of books on the table, and then opened the letter, saying as she did so, "Now, Francis Randall, say what you have to say again."

PYRAMID, COL., *May* 12, 1897.

MISS JANE PROCTER,
MARKHAM, O.

DEAR JANE,—It is almost six months since I asked you to share your life with mine, and this letter is simply to tell you that I have not been able to accept your answer as final. You know well enough that I love you wholly, as a man should

who asks a woman to be his wife. I am in doubt as to your real feeling towards me, Jane; but if you do love me, nothing ought to keep your life from mine. You said you would never marry a minister. I am sure you would never become my wife if I left the ministry, and you know me at least well enough to know that I can never abandon the choice of my life-work.

But I need you. That sounds selfish. If you love me at all, you will understand how far from selfish is my need. Won't you, can't you, marry me, Jane? My little church here is in the midst of a rough mining camp, and my salary is small. But I have a growing income from my little stories. I can make two people very comfortable, Jane, even out here. There was something in the way you said "No," last Christmas, Jane, that made me feel I might some time hear you say "Yes." That is my only excuse for writing to you. If you will let me come to you, no man will be happier or prouder, or more thankful to the good God, than your lover,

FRANCIS RANDALL.

"'Than your lover, Francis Randall,'" repeated Jane softly. "As if I had only one, and he that one," she added, with a small frown, and then looking directly at the photograph, she said aloud, "No, I will never marry you, sir. I am not fitted to be a minister's wife. A little Episcopal church in a new mining camp out West! Jane Procter, it would be foolishness. You always said you would not marry a minister. If he was only Congregational, or something nearer my own church! But it's the ministry itself. I can't! I can't! But I do love him!—I said I would never tell him so!"

She suddenly snatched the photograph from its prominent place on the table, and thrust it into the drawer and shut it. And then she spread the letter

out on the table, and laid her cheek upon it, and cried softly.

In the Rev. John Procter's study on the evening of that eventful day in the parsonage, there was a real struggle going on in the heart of the minister. The letter from his son had stirred emotions that lay deep and strong in the older man. The problem of the town which he had grown to love through his long residence in it, had never before stood out so sharply as to-day.

He had given up the text and subject of his sermon, and was planning something entirely different for the coming Lord's Day.

He stood by the window and watched the harvest moon rise. It came up so as to make sharp and distinct against its yellow disc a church steeple. It was the steeple of his own church. When it passed out of sight, Rev. John Procter turned away and thoughtfully walked up and down a long time. A strong and growing conviction had entered his life. From that day he would never be able to say that a more dominant passion ruled his ministry than the passion for a united church in Markham and the world. Still, as he walked, and his soul burned within him, came the old questions raised by his religious census of the place, and his own doubts.

"Can these ministers and churches be brought together? Can it be done without a real miracle? How shall it ever be brought about? Can Christ's prayer be answered here in this place, and His servants, His disciples, be one, even as He was with the Father?"

And he was still asking these solemn questions when the clock in his own church steeple sounded the hour of twelve, and another of God's great days of life had begun for a world of priceless and immortal, but unredeemed, humanity.

CHAPTER III.

DEAN RANDALL RECEIVES A LETTER.

IT was the morning after John Procter had received his disquieting letter from his son, that Dean Randall was reading in his study in the manse which was built close by the cathedral.

Dean Randall was a man between forty-five and fifty, well built, with a churchman's face and dress. No one would ever mistake him for any other than a clergyman. There was, however, nothing priestly, in the narrow or offensive sense, in his appearance. It was said in Markham that he stood a good chance some time of being made a bishop.

He had been reading for an hour, and had laid the book down to do some writing, when a servant brought him a letter.

It was said long afterwards that among the many astonishing things that occurred in Markham that winter it was a little remarkable as a coincidence that two short letters written by two young men, each to his father, a minister, had much to do with the result of very important events.

The Dean opened the letter quietly, but he had not read far when his face showed signs of some deep feeling. What caused that feeling can be

shown by knowing the contents of the entire letter.

The letter was dated at "Pyramid, Col.," and was from the Dean's son, Francis:—

DEAR FATHER,—I have already written you quite a complete account of this mining camp and something of my church work and of the people who make up my parish; but I have not told you much about my relations to the other churches here.

There are, perhaps, twelve hundred people in Pyramid at present, and the place is rapidly filling up. There are six church organisations: Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, and my own. The Baptist and Methodist people have no church buildings, but meet every Sunday in a store room, one denomination in the morning, the other in the afternoon, in the same place.

But what I write this particular letter for is to tell you a little of my experience with one of the other clergymen. I met with an accident a month ago. I wrote you nothing of it, because I did not wish to alarm mother.

The mountains all about here are full of prospecting shafts. In crossing over the range one night to see a sick miner, I fell into one of these shafts. Fortunately it was not deep, but I sprained my ankle and was severely bruised. I might have lain there uncomfortably all night, if I had not been found by the Congregational minister, who had been out on a similar errand with mine. To make a long story short, he succeeded in getting me into his own house, where I am now staying.

It is impossible for me to tell you, father, all that has led up to my present convictions relating to church matters.

This little accident is but an incident in the whole course of events, I am sure, and yet it has had something to do with my changed views. You know I never felt the importance that so many of our clergymen have felt, of emphasising the ritualistic part of our church life. Since having a church of my own in this wild mining camp, with a parish that calls for a very plain human service, coming down close to the coarse,

common, necessary things of daily life, I have come to regard less and less the forms and ceremonies and traditions of our church, and to feel more and more the longing to simply give this parish the thing it most ought to have, and that is the gospel of daily bread for daily needs.

You will be startled now, father, by what I tell you. Last Sunday I invited the Congregational minister to preach to my people in my church. His building has been undergoing some repairs, and could not be used. My lame ankle, which has been very stubborn to heal, made it impossible for me to leave my friend's house, so that I could not be present at the service. I have heard, however, that the people enjoyed a good sermon. He read the prayers, and the service was the same as usual, except that he did not wear the gown in the pulpit. He offered to do so, but as he is a rather small man, and I am over six feet and large in proportion, and there is only one gown in the church wardrobe, it seemed foolish to insist on such an unimportant thing.

I understand there has been a little talk about this. Some of my people think it was very irregular. They have only words of praise for the sermon, however. It was practical, and helped everybody.

I have been thinking, as I lay here in this little room, and growing to like my friends, the Congregational minister and his wife, more and more, if there is not some way in which our two churches can unite more closely to do the same work. Exchanging pulpits is a very small matter. It might, or might not, mean a real union of church life. I have talked it over with Mr. Clark. He is ready to work with us on any basis of service to the whole camp. I am sure we can accomplish much more together than separately, and possibly prevail on the other churches to enter upon the same fellowship.

I do not know how much you can sympathise with me, dear father, in this matter. I have no doubt you are disturbed by a part of this letter. If so, it is simply because I have frankly told you my inmost thought. The Episcopal Church means less to me every day than the Christian work that the church ought to do. I find in my correspondence with the younger

men in our denomination, that many of them feel as I do. We are entering a new period of church history, and I believe, father, that the next twenty-five years will witness great changes in the customs and traditions of our own beloved church.

There is one other matter I have had in mind to write you about for some time. Mother knows, and perhaps she has told you, although she said, when I was home last Christmas, that she hesitated to speak to you about it.

I love Jane Procter, the daughter of your neighbour, John Procter, and have asked her to be my wife. She has refused to marry me because I am a clergyman. Her refusal has not changed, in any particular, my feeling for her. The time may come when she will share my life with me. However that may be, father, I wish you to know how matters are. You urged me, in your last letter, to have a home of my own, for the good of the parish and myself. Your letter led me to believe that you knew nothing of this part of my life. I shall never marry any one but Jane Procter.

If I have hurt you in any way by anything in this letter, it is more painful to me than to you. A young man is apt to think that he knows more and better than his elders. But I am positively sure that for myself the value of much that our church has counted dear in the past is rapidly passing away. I see more clearly every day the needs of the souls of men. Regardless to a great extent of past forms and customs, I am determined to go on in my ministry with the one fixed purpose of building up the kingdom of God, rather than the Episcopal Church. If this shall mean a vital and even organic union with all the other denominations, I shall welcome it as I would welcome a personal visit from Jesus Christ. Give much love to mother.—Your affectionate son, FRANCIS.

Dean Randall held his son's letter in his hand for a long time after he had finished reading it. There was nothing in the letter similar to that which John Procter had received from his son, except the com-

plete frankness with which the confession of the young men's religious experiences was made, and at first Dean Randall was affected very much as John Procter was.

He was disturbed, and even angry. Never once during his own ministry of over thirty years had he dreamed of inviting into his pulpit a clergyman of another denomination. It seemed to him like the breaking up of the entire system of church order to think of such a thing. He had always lived on pleasant terms with the other ministers, but his relations to them and their churches were for the most part purely social, never religious.

That confession of his son's, however, did not affect him so disagreeably as the general tone of the letter, which looked like the breaking up of all the traditional accepted customs of the Episcopal Church. Could he, Dean Randall, ever think of such a thing as uniting in any organic way with any other church in Markham?

The favourite picture in his study was Hoffman's "Christ in Gethsemane." It hung just above his writing-desk. An impulse he could not explain, led the Dean towards this picture now.

Some time near to that moment in Christ's life He had prayed the great prayer that His disciples might be one. The Dean could not drive away the thought that Jesus was not thinking during that supreme moment so much of the advancement of any particular church as of the kingdom of God on earth.

He looked away from the picture, and his eyes

rested on a bundle of letters in one of the pigeon-holes of his desk. Among those letters was one from a very powerful and influential member of the order of bishops in his diocese, in which he gave Dean Randall almost a positive assurance that he was the next man who would, in all probability, be chosen as bishop for a near vacancy.

Clergymen have their ambitions as well as politicians or other men.

This was the ambition of Dean Randall's life—the bishopric. His son's letter disturbed this dream. If the Episcopal Church and its traditions were to become secondary, in Dean Randall's parish, to the building of God's kingdom by union with other Christian bodies, what would become of that chance for the bishop's office? There was no hope of receiving that honour unless he remained faithful to the old-established traditions of the Episcopal Church.

The Dean was not willing to face the question in that bald, uncompromising manner. He felt the need of putting off the whole matter, and, rising, he opened his study door and called for his wife.

She came in from the dining-room, which was adjoining. The Dean gave her the letter without a word.

The study door was ajar, and the servant at work in the dining-room heard Mrs. Randall exclaim—

"What! The poor boy! Fell down one of those horrible mining shafts! Oh, he must be killed!"

The servant listened carefully, but heard only a low reply made by the Dean, which she could not make out. Then the study door was shut, and only the

murmur of the two voices from within reached her ear.

She went out into the kitchen just as the market-man came into the back porch, and while he was taking some vegetables out of his basket, she said—

"Have you heard the news? Mr. Francis fell down one of the mines out in Colorado, and was probably killed. I just heard Mrs. Randall say so in the study. She's in there now with the Dean. They had a letter from Pyramid this morning."

"You don't say!" said the market-man sympathetically. "Well! That'll be a blow to them. Young Mr. Randall was a likely young man. There's no telling what risks folks run in those Western mining towns."

"That's so," said the servant, as she picked up the vegetables and went into the house.

The market-man went his way, with a bit of interesting news to retail along with his fruit and vegetables.

He stopped at Rev. John Procter's house very soon, for the two ministers lived in the same block.

Mrs. Procter did not keep a servant, but a woman was at the parsonage that morning, washing.

"You don't say!" she exclaimed, as she straightened up from her tub and faced the market-man. "Poor fellow! Terribly mangled, you say he was? I'm sorry for his father and mother."

"What's that, Mrs. Brown?" asked Mrs. Procter, coming out into the shed. Jane was just inside the open kitchen door, wiping the breakfast dishes. They

had breakfast quite late at the parsonage some mornings.

"Why, ma'am," said Mrs. Brown, eagerly anxious to get ahead of the market-man, "Mr. Francis Randall, the Dean's son, out at Pyramid, Colorado, was killed by falling down one of those mines out there. Killed instantly. His folks got the news thi——"

There was a sudden crash of broken crockery, as Jane let the dish she was wiping drop. The next minute she was in the shed, her white face trembling, as she seized Mrs. Brown by the arm.

"Who said so?" she asked in almost a fierce voice.

"Ask him," said Mrs. Brown, pointing in a frightened way to the market-man, who was just going out of the yard.

Jane rushed out of the shed, and did not heed her mother's cry, "Jane, Jane! come back. Perhaps it is not true."

"Who told you?" she asked the man, as he paused by his waggon in wonder at her sudden appearance and strange manner.

"Told me what?"

"Who told you that Francis Randall was killed?"

"Oh, I heard it straight from the girl at the manse. She heard Mrs. Randall——"

But Jane was gone down the side walk, running with gasps and sobs towards the manse, crying as she ran, "Oh, it can't be true! It can't be true!"

The Dean and Mrs. Randall were still in the study talking over their son's letter, when they heard the front-door bell ring sharply. A moment after, voices sounded in the hall, and quickly came into the dining-

room. Then there was a sudden knock on the study door, and when the Dean opened it, to his amazement Jane Procter confronted him and his wife, crying out hysterically—

"He isn't dead, is he?"

"Who isn't dead?" asked the Dean stupidly; but Mrs. Randall caught Jane's arm, and drew her to her.

"No, no, he isn't dead. Who said so?"

Jane fell into her arms sobbing out something they could not understand. The Dean picked up his glasses, which had fallen on the floor in the excitement, and with a slight smile on his scholarly face, he patted Jane on the head.

Jane ceased to sob, but after a minute of silence she looked up and whispered to Mrs. Randall, "You're sure he isn't fatally hurt?"

"There's his letter." Mrs. Randall held it out. "I think his father and mother are more dangerously hurt than he is," she added, with a side look at the Dean.

"Oh," said Jane, looking up, and glancing at the Dean. He had turned around, and was pretending to be busy with something at his desk. Mrs. Randall, like the wise woman she was, put an arm about Jane, and walked with her out of the study into the music-room.

The two women had a little talk together. It is not quite clear whether Jane felt better or worse for the exhibition of her feeling. Mrs. Randall had tears in her eyes when Jane finally went away.

As for Jane, she, somewhat abashed, walked slowly

home. On the way she said once, "If he HAD been killed—but no—I cannot—I will not marry him even if I do—if I do think a good deal of him."

And so, when the school term opened the next week, Jane went back to her old work, her life-work as she called it; but the heart of every true, healthy man or woman is hungry for love, and Jane, as she listened to the droning of the children's voices in the schoolroom, often had a vision of the pale face of a very tall young man sitting with a bandaged foot in a Congregational minister's house out in Colorado, and in her heart she forgave the servant, and the market-man, and the wash-woman for saying that Francis Randall was dead, because he was not dead at all, not even in her heart, in spite of her stubborn repetition of the words, "No, I will never marry a minister!"

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM LEAVES ANDOVER.

ABOUT a month after that letter from Francis Randall had caused such a disturbance in the family circle of two homes, the Rev. John Procter came in late from parish calls with another letter, which he read aloud to his wife and Jane at the supper-table:—

DEAR FATHER, MOTHER, AND JANE, (the letter was from William),—I have at last made up my mind to leave Andover and try my fortune, for a time at least, in one of the mining camps of Colorado. I have tried a number of things here, and do not make any of them go. A son of one of the professors here is part owner of the ore reduction mills at Pyramid. He wants a man who understands chemistry to act as assistant superintendent in the mill. I am pretty well up in chemistry, as I made it a special study in college. I have written asking for the position if it is still open, and if it is I shall be on the way inside of a week.

Please don't feel that my life is a failure, or anything of that sort. I am having a struggle at present with my lifelong habits of church loyalty, and the work I am going into now is totally different from all you have dreamed of for me, but I believe it is all I can do just now. I would rather you would not say anything to Dean Randall's family about my going to Pyramid. Of course I know their son is there. We have been away so much to school and college that you know we

have not been very well acquainted, and the way I feel now ("tumbled up and down in my mind,' as John Bunyan says), I would rather not meet him. I should be sure to say something to hurt his churchman's feelings. Of course, in that little camp I may run across him soon, anyway. If I do, I presume he would not care to renew our small acquaintance.

The hard physical work will, I hope, make a man of me again. In any case, I do not want you to feel deeply disappointed in the way I have turned out.—Your loving

WILLIAM.

John Procter said very little. Mrs. Procter cried over the letter. Jane had a variety of emotions. There was another part of her life in that mining camp now, though she was honestly puzzled to know why her brother did not want to meet Francis Randall.

"I'll answer the letter and take it down to the office before the Eastern mail goes out," said John Procter. "It will reach Will before he starts West."

"It seems strange he does not say anything about stopping to see us on his way," said Mrs. Procter sadly.

"That is what I was going to urge him to do," said John Procter gravely.

He wrote a serious, loving letter to his son. He did not say one word of reproval. But he urged him, for his mother's and Jane's sake, to stop at Markham on his way West.

The letter reached Andover the day before William was to start. He had been given the place in the mill, and there was no hesitation in his mind about going, but the letter from his father touched

him. He thought it over that night, and next day he bought his ticket with a stop-over privilege.

John Procter was at the station to meet him when the train came in. People on the platform saw a rather slight, pale-faced young man come down to meet the older one. They shook hands silently, with a simple, "How do you do, father?" "I am glad to see you, William."

Inside the parsonage, William showed more emotion when his mother and Jane met him and kissed him. The tears were in his eyes as he took off his coat and hung up his hat in the familiar hall. He was at home.

During the two days that followed, John Procter and his son had some very earnest talks together. There had been a secret hope in the father's mind that his son might reconsider his determination to go out of the ministry for ever.

"I don't deny, Will," his father said, as they sat in the study going over all the arguments they were so familiar with,—"I don't deny that the Church of Christ in the world is far from being what He prayed it might be. But do you think we shall help to bring in the millennium quicker by abandoning the Church and trying to do Christian work outside instead of inside the organisation?"

"I cannot decide for any one else, father," said William, and his pale blue eyes spoke of a resolution that could not be changed. "It is useless for me to think of doing MY Christian work in a pulpit. I would fail, as any man ought to fail who tries to work where his heart is not in it."

John Procter sighed, and gave up all effort after that conversation to change his son's views. The only approach he made to the subject again was just before William stepped on the train that carried him West.

"You can preach from the pulpit of your mill out there," he suggested.

William knew what he meant. He replied, as he shook hands very hard, "Yes, father, I haven't lost my faith in Christ as Master, if I have lost faith in the Church as my workshop."

He stood a moment on the rear platform of the car, looking earnestly at the little home group standing on the station platform, and then turned back to the parsonage.

There was one little incident in William's stop at Markham that has a place in this narrative, and belongs to the series of events that made important history in the lives of several persons in both Markham and Pyramid.

The same evening he had had that last talk with his father, William was in his old room upstairs, packing his trunk, putting into it carefully some things that his mother and Jane had made for him.

Jane came in bringing some things as William kneeled by the open trunk. He was just putting into one of the pockets of the tray a package of letters and photographs.

"Want to see some of my Seminary classmates?" he asked, as he handed her the case of pictures.

Jane sat down on the floor by the trunk and began

to take out the pictures. William continued his packing.

"Do they let girls study for the ministry at Andover?" Jane asked.

"What's that?"

"Is that one of your classmates at Andover?" Jane asked, as she turned the face of an attractive-looking young woman towards William.

"Give me that!" cried William, with a rudeness so unusual for his gentle spirit that Jane was hurt by it.

She handed him the photograph and rose to leave the room, but was recalled by a new tone of voice from William.

"Don't go, Jane. I'm upset. I thought I had lost the picture. Come back. I want to tell you something."

Jane's curiosity was stronger than her momentary feeling, and she came back at once and sat down by the trunk again.

"That is the face of the girl I love," said William gravely.

"I don't see anything dreadful about it, Will. She looks like a very nice girl."

Will was silent. He turned to the trunk again.

"Tell me, Will," said Jane, putting an arm around his neck as she sat by him.

"There isn't much to tell," said William in a muffled voice, as he threw a book into the trunk. "We were engaged, and when I changed views about going on with the ministry, she—well, we talked it over, and agreed it would be wiser to break the

engagement. She said she could not marry me if I was not going to be a minister."

"How funny that is!" exclaimed Jane suddenly.

"I don't see anything funny about it," said William gloomily, as he turned away from his sister.

"Oh, but it is," replied Jane. "Because, Will,—I —you see—this girl won't marry you unless you are a minister, and I won't—that is—I have made up my mind never to marry any one who is a minister. If we could only straighten things out! They seem so mixed, somehow."

William did not answer. Finally, Jane stole a little closer and laid her cheek against his, and then William knew that she was crying, because her cheek was wet.

"Dear me!" he cried, in some bewilderment. "Are you—have you been disappointed in love too, Jane?" he asked, forgetting for a moment his own experience.

"No," said Jane, crying a little harder. "I am not disappointed. That isn't the word." But she would not tell William anything more, and after finding out that the Andover girl was a daughter of one of the professors, and also a teacher in the public schools, like herself, she went out, and left William to himself.

"Girls are so queer," he said, as he finished his packing. The missing photograph did not go back into the trunk, but into an inside pocket, and out into that raw mining camp, with its strange experiences, William Procter, once theologian, but now

assistant superintendent in the Golconda Mill, carried a sore heart, as well as a disturbed religious spirit.

He had been in Pyramid two weeks, and was beginning to get acquainted with his new strange duties in the mill, when one evening he had a call from Francis Randall.

William was dressed in his workman's clothes, and, like every other man in the mill, was covered with dust and grime. The rattle of the machinery, the glow of the mixing carriage as it regularly emerged from its white-hot furnace and rolled on its circular track, radiating its intense heat as it travelled ceaselessly around, the splashing of the chemical stream running over the zinc reservoirs, all combined to make the surroundings of the new assistant superintendent full of interest to one who had never seen them.

William had stepped to the door of one of the large vat-rooms, and was standing there enjoying a breath of pure air. He had inhaled more than usual chlorine gas that afternoon, and the choking sensation, combined with his unusual efforts to accustom his lungs to the great altitude of Pyramid, gave his face a pallor almost like one in a dead faint.

As he stood in the door, Randall came up, and before he had time to draw back into the vat-room, the clergyman had put out a hand, saying very heartily as he did so—

"Glad to see you, Procter. I heard from one of the Andover professors, a friend of father's, that you were here. You're not sick, I hope?"

He added the words as he saw William's face closer in the evening light.

"Nothing serious. I've taken in a little more of chlorine than is good for me. Excuse me for not shaking hands. These rubber gloves don't come off easy."

"Yes, I know." Francis spoke with a quiet manner that made William feel as if he was as well dressed as the clergyman. That was one of the good things about Randall. He never impressed anybody with his own superiority of dress.

The two young men stood talking a few minutes by the door, and then Randall started on.

"I'll be very glad if you'll come and see me," said Randall. "I'm stopping, for the present, with Mr. Clark, the Congregational minister. I have a room there. If you want any books at any time, my library is at your disposal."

"Thank you," said William. He did not say that he would come, and Francis did not appear to notice it.

"He never said a word about church, or coming to hear him, or anything of that sort," said William to himself, as he turned back into the vat-room. "He seems like a sensible sort of fellow, but I suppose he is High Church enough when it comes to his preaching and ritual and all that. Guess I'll have to go to church next Sunday and hear him."

And when Sunday came, he went with some curiosity to hear Randall preach. Some interesting things came of that curiosity, which belong to the history of Markham fully as much as to that of Pyramid.

Meanwhile, Dean Randall was unable to throw off the impression made by his son's letter. In spite of his attempt to forget it, the struggle in his mind grew. It finally narrowed down to the plain question of his personal ambition for the bishopric and the opportunity to use his church for the growth of Christianity. His own ambition and the cause of Christ were finally in open and unmistakable conflict.

It must be said this result had not been reached suddenly. Dean Randall's experience for several years had been silently and slowly shaping matters. His son's letter was only one additional influence. But while the people in his parish and the citizens of Markham and the ministers of the other churches never dreamed of any struggle in the life of the scholarly, reserved Episcopal clergyman, there was daily growing in the Episcopal manse a conflict which was the conflict between a personal, selfish, narrow ambition, and the world-wide power of the cross—a struggle as old as Gethsemane, and always full of the most intense and vital interest to the human race.

At the end of three weeks after the reception of his son's letter, the Dean's conflict had reached a crisis. How great that crisis was, not even he knew. But he was soon to have the clearest and severest test made of his church life. That test was caused by a natural event.

The Dean was in his study Friday night. It was late, but he kept on writing. Once he looked up at his "Christ in Gethsemane." The wind was

blowing hard, and shook the windows and whistled sharply down the broad chimney.

Towards midnight the Dean went to his window and looked out. He had been standing there several minutes, when he noticed an unusual light in the Congregational Church.

John Procter had a study-room in the church, but he seldom used it at night. The Dean stood watching the gleam through the windows of the vestry. It grew stronger. Suddenly, a sharp tongue of flame shot through the window over one of the doors, and the Dean knew at once what the light was.

He ran into the other room and called out to his wife, "The Congregational Church is on fire!" He snatched his hat and ran out.

By the time he had reached the church, flames were leaping out of the little windows above the bell in the steeple. Almost the entire town turned out. With the help of the fire department, they saved the parsonage, but the church was completely destroyed. The people drew back in awe as the steeple fell upon the roof, blown by the gale which seemed to drive the tall, blazing torch through the air like a giant spear down through the timbers.

John Procter and his wife and Jane stood in the parsonage yard looking at the smouldering heap. That was several hours after the church was first seen to be on fire. A group of neighbours and church members stood near the minister's family.

The Dean came up. He had been working hard, with scores of other men, carrying John Procter's books out when it looked as if the parsonage must go

with the church. He had also helped to carry them back again, when the danger was over. Several times during the excitement he had noticed Mr. Harris, the Baptist minister, hard at work. Once they had hold of the same box, containing some valuable papers and pictures from John Procter's library.

"Well," John Procter was saying to one of his parishioners, "this is one less church building in Markham, at any rate."

"Very sorry for you, neighbour," said the Dean. He was blackened and a little burned. His coat was torn across the back, and his whole appearance was very unministerial.

"Very kind of you, Dean Randall," said John Procter, shaking hands with him heartily. "I can't say that I would like to do the same thing for you some time, but I certainly owe you much, and appreciate your kindness."

"You won't have any place to preach next Sunday," said Mr. Harris, before the Dean could reply. "We shall be glad to offer your people the use of the Baptist Church in the morning."

John Procter was undoubtedly astonished. He said to himself, "I have done Harris an injustice." Aloud he said—

"Thank you heartily, Harris. I accept your offer for my people, with pleasure."

The Dean hesitated. No one there, in that dishevelled group of people standing about the ruins of that church building, had any idea that one of their number was having a battle with himself beside

which the recent fight with the fire was insignificant.

It was on the lips of the Dean to say, "We shall be glad to give your people the use of the cathedral in the evening, neighbour."

But he checked himself with the thought of the astonishment that would come into all those people's faces at such an invitation.

He had taken a step towards John Procter. He now stepped back, and after another strange hesitation he walked away.

When he reached home he lay down on his lounge in the study. It was nearly morning. His wife thought he was asleep. He was broad awake, and asking himself the question, "Shall I invite Procter to use my pulpit next Sunday or the Sunday after?" Simple as the question was, upon its answer depended the future ambition of the Dean. But when the morning finally dawned, the question had not found an answer.

CHAPTER V.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

IT was Sunday morning in Markham, after the burning of the Congregational Church. John Procter was in his study reading over the sermon which he expected to preach in the Baptist Church.

He had chosen a written sermon, which he had preached to his own people several years before. It was one of his best, so his wife said. There was nothing in it which could possibly offend any one of any other denomination. "It was a sermon just as good for one man as for another," John Procter said to himself, as he walked up and down, turning over the manuscript to familiarise himself with the sentences. He asked himself once or twice why every sermon was not good for all men alike.

It was nearly half-past ten o'clock, and he was about to come out of the study and call his wife and daughter, when Jane knocked at the door, and when he opened it, handed him a note.

"The servant brought it over just now from the Dean," she said. "She is waiting for an answer."

John Procter was surprised. The Dean had never written him a letter, and he had no possible hint as

to what the note contained. It was therefore in the greatest astonishment that John Procter read the following:—

MY DEAR BROTHER AND NEIGHBOUR,—I understand that Brother Cameron, of the Presbyterian Church, has invited you to speak from his pulpit this evening, but if it does not seem to you to come too late to be hearty, will you accept my invitation to occupy the pulpit of Grace Cathedral next Sunday morning? If you will reply by a word and send it over by the servant, I will announce to my people at my service this morning, and Brother Harris can do the same from his pulpit. Mrs. Randall joins me in sympathy with you for your loss, and congratulates Mrs. Procter and yourself on the saving of your parsonage.—In Christ's name, your brother and neighbour,

NATHAN RANDALL.

If the Dean had come into his study and fired a gun at him, John Procter could hardly have been more astonished than he was by the reception of this note. He rubbed his eyes and read the note again. There was no mistake about it. The Dean had actually invited him to preach in the Episcopal Church. It was an unheard-of thing. It had never happened in Markham before. But even in the midst of his astonishment and excitement, John Procter said to himself, "I don't know why I ought to be astonished. If we are all alike Christians, why not?" In spite of that, he was astonished a good deal, and much perplexed. He stood a moment with the note in his hand. Then he remembered that the servant was waiting. He stepped out into the hall. Mrs. Procter and Jane were ready for church, and waiting for him.

"Are you ready, John? It is time to go," said Mrs. Procter.

"Read that," said John Procter, handing the Dean's note to her.

"Why, he has actually invited you to preach in Grace Cathedral!" exclaimed Mrs. Procter.

"He is waiting for an answer," said John Procter thoughtfully.

"There's only one answer to give to such an invitation, John."

John Procter looked at his wife and daughter, and then stepped back into his study and wrote his reply. It was very short, but he experienced more emotion while writing it than he had felt over the composition of most of his sermons.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to accept your invitation to preach next Sunday morning in Grace Cathedral. I accept it in the same spirit of Christian fellowship which prompts you to make it. We thank you for your sympathy, and pray for great blessings on you and your people to-day.

To the Very Rev. Dean Randall, Grace Cathedral.

Your neighbour, JOHN PROCTER.

He sent his note over to the manse by the servant, and, with Mrs. Procter and Jane, started for the Baptist Church.

"Were you ever more surprised in your life?" asked Mrs. Procter, as they walked along.

"No, I don't know that I ever was," said John Procter gravely.

"Mrs. Randall told me that Franci—that her son out in Pyramid had lately invited the Congregational

minister there to preach in his pulpit," said Jane, giving out some of the confidence Mrs. Randall had shared with her that day when she had run over to the manse.

"The father is following his son's example in this case," said Mrs. Procter, with a slight smile.

"It is very remarkable." John Procter's mind was excited by the event, but he was silent until they reached the church. Mrs. Procter and Jane went in, and he went around to the side entrance, where the minister's study was.

The people of Markham who were present at the Baptist Church that morning will never forget the service. It made an impression on them that they felt for years.

The church was filled to overflowing. John Procter's congregation turned out almost to a member, and the Baptist people were present more largely than usual. Nearly every person in the audience was known to John Procter personally, and all of them sympathised with him in his loss. During his fifteen years' residence in Markham he had won the respect and confidence of his townsmen, and they all liked him as a preacher.

The first distinct surprise to the congregation came when the Baptist minister gave out the notices.

He read all the notices relating to his own church, including the preaching of John Procter at the Presbyterian Church in the evening, and then, after a little pause, he said—

"I have also to announce, especially for the benefit of our friends from the Congregational Church who

are with us to-day, that their pastor, by invitation from Dean Randall, will preach in Grace Cathedral next Sunday morning."

A distinct shock went over the people. They turned and looked questioningly at one another. Very many whispered to their neighbours, "What was that? Did you understand he said the Episcopal Church?" Never in all the church history of Markham had such a surprising notice been given out from a pulpit.

The second marked feature of the service was John Procter's sermon.

When he rose and laid his manuscript on the open Bible, he was seen to hesitate a moment, and then slowly shut the Bible up, and shut his written sermon within it.

He stood a moment looking over the pulpit to the people, and then began slowly to talk about the event of the fire which had destroyed his church. He could not let the occasion go by, he said, without thanking his townsmen for the kindly, prompt assistance they had given him and his family during the danger which had threatened his home. He felt as if he owed a special word of thanksgiving to his neighbour, the pastor of the church where he and his people were grateful guests this morning, for the careful zeal he had shown in looking after the books and pictures in his study at the parsonage.

All this the people listened to with pleased interest, and it seemed entirely in keeping with the character of the occasion; but they were evidently waiting and expecting the minister to open the Bible and begin

his sermon. Instead of doing so, John Procter went on, with a natural continuation of his personal remarks about the helpfulness shown on the night of the fire, to speak in general about the power which an entire Christian community might have if it would unite as one to save the whole town from the common danger of sin as it had united to save one family in the case of the burning church, because their danger was the town's danger as well.

"There is the fire of the saloon, for example," John Procter went on, and he had never preached better, so his own people, and the Baptist people as well, thought, "a fire which threatens every home. What a fight we could make against it if all the Christians in Markham were united! There is the fire of Sabbath desecration growing more coarse and open every year. If the Christian people in all the churches really came together as one, could they not put that fire out? There is the fire of the neglected factory district, where vice and crime are growing. Is not that a common danger-point that we ought to be facing together? There is the fire of corrupt, selfish, political control of our own town. If all the church members in Markham always voted together for the best man, regardless of national party divisions, could we not elect the men of our choice, and put out for ever this fire of personal selfishness which burns within the state and endangers all the best life of our municipality? There is the fire of wasteful, selfish amusements, which even in our comparatively small community drains the time and strength not only of the unchristian but of the professing Christian

population as well. If we were working together with a common purpose as disciples of one Master, do you not think we could reduce this wastefulness to a minimum, and redeem the time which does not belong to us, but to the Lord who gave up all for our salvation?"

So John Procter continued that morning preaching far better than he knew. The application of the fire to the condition in Markham was so clear, so plain and just, that the congregation felt and acknowledged the strength of the appeal. Heads nodded in assent all over the house. Surely if they would all turn out in a body, as they had done, to save one another's property from physical fire, it was beyond a doubt a more necessary thing that they unite to put out these other fires that endangered the souls of the people. That they were not doing it, was evident from the facts which John Procter pictured as he drew his sermon to a close. The saloon in Markham was powerful. The desecration of the Sabbath was growing worse. The factory district was a source of constant crime. The political management of the town was controlled by the most selfish and unprincipled men. The young men and women of Markham were throwing away the most valuable hours of their leisure in dancing and whist-playing and frivolity. Meanwhile, Markham had twelve churches, twelve ministers, twelve church buildings, endeavour societies, prayer-meetings, preaching, and all the forms of religious life. But it was not directed towards a common end, nor animated by a common desire to bring in the reign of the kingdom of God in Markham.

It was at the very close that John Procter showed the wisdom of his appeal. It would have been an easy thing for a man of narrow zeal in speaking along the line of Christian Union to offend unconsciously the disciples of other denominations.

John Procter avoided this. It was nothing short of the divine power of the Holy Ghost that saved his sermon from doing more harm than good. He finished his sermon with such a loving and Christian spirit, that all were touched by it. He alluded, in words of gratitude, again, to the brotherly spirit which had prompted the Baptist people to welcome his own that morning. He spoke of the service which had been announced for the Episcopal Church the next Sabbath with a deep feeling of praise for such a union of Christian believers. And he concluded the sermon with a prayer of unusual power and beauty, that the Spirit of Truth might lead them into all the truth, and make possible, speedily, the loving prayer of Jesus that His disciples might be one, even as He was one with the Father.

It was, perhaps, the truest test of the impression made by this sermon that when the service was over, the people began at once to talk about it, instead of discussing, as they usually did, social and political happenings of the week. They continued talking about it on the way home, and during their dinners that afternoon. If there had been given the congregation an opportunity to speak in an after-meeting, there is no question that very many voices from both the churches would have eagerly said Amen to all that John Procter had said.

Charles Harris and John Procter walked slowly away from the church together. They were the last to leave.

"I want to thank you again for the sermon," said Mr. Harris, when he reached the corner where he turned down another street to his home. The two men were alone. Their families had gone on home to prepare dinner.

"I am very glad if I spoke right, if I said what all the people need."

"I believe you did," said Harris slowly. He paused, and then looking at Procter, said with a tone that revealed more feeling than Procter had ever given him credit for—

"Procter, I suppose you and I really, deep down, want to see God's will done in Markham. But I suppose we have either purposely or ignorantly misunderstood each other in church matters. Don't you think, perhaps, all of us ministers here in Markham have failed to know each other as we might know?"

John Procter was startled. Again he recalled, with almost a glow of condemnation, his own pen picture of the different ministers of Markham as he thought he knew them.

"I have no doubt of it. We criticise and condemn without knowing the facts, without really knowing one another. But if we only could get together——"

He spoke with an emotion he really felt, an emotion which was the result of the whole service in the church.

"Perhaps we shall some time——" the Baptist minister spoke slowly as before. The two men paused a moment, looking into each other's faces with a new and kindlier look than they had ever known. They parted with a friendly handshake, and each walked home very thoughtfully.

That was an eventful Sabbath in Markham. John Procter, not even himself yet realising the way he was being led of the Spirit, not reckoning that he had already passed far beyond even all his past experience in his desire for a union of church life, spoke again on the same theme in the Presbyterian Church in the evening. He was at first tempted to take his written sermon which he had expected to use in the morning. But the glow of the morning service had, during the day, grown into a white heat which reflected the inward passion of the man. The theme of the Union of Christendom is large. It has many sides of approach. The ministers of all the churches might well take a whole year to preach a year's sermons upon it. So John Procter had no difficulty in avoiding a repetition of the morning's sermon.

He showed how already the different denominations held in matters of essential life practically everything alike. There was no dispute in any of the denominations over the great moral and spiritual lessons of Jesus. Conduct was a thing that amounted to the same thing in a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist or a Baptist or an Episcopalian. The Sermon on the Mount was not sectarian. It was human. Christian character flowed out of a love for

Christ and a desire to imitate Him. So the churches, after all, did believe alike when it came to the absolutely vital things of existence, which were summed up in the Great Law of Christ, Love to God and Love to Man.

It was said by those who were present at the Presbyterian Church in Markham that night, that such a sermon had never been heard in the town before. Again, as in the morning, the Holy Spirit seemed to baptize the service with His presence. Hugh Cameron thanked John Procter with tears in his eyes.

"We must have you and your people with us again soon," he said heartily, as they parted at the close of the service, and again the two ministers felt the thrill of an unaccustomed fellowship in the clasp of hands.

That night, for the first time in the life of that town, it almost seemed as if the Christian disciples of Markham were to be stirred out of their long years of formal, sectarian habits. And yet John Procter, in a moment of natural reaction, as he went over the events of the two services, could not crowd out of his mind the old question, "How can the churches ever really unite? Can it be done without a miracle? The emotions are easy to stir. Is it any more that has been done to-day? When it comes to actual, vital union, what will the churches do? That is the question."

Nevertheless, he went forward that week with a new sensation as he anticipated the service in the Episcopal Church. What should he preach

about? Would it be wise to continue this same subject of church union? He had never given the choice of a subject for preaching so much thought since he left the Seminary twenty-five years before.

CHAPTER VI.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BISHOP.

BUT deeply as the two congregations had been moved that Sabbath by John Procter's preaching, it was insignificant compared with the feeling aroused in the entire town by the notice which rapidly spread of his invitation to preach in Grace Cathedral the following Lord's Day. The knowledge of this coming unheard-of event soon passed beyond the limits of Markham, and before the end of the week reached the ears of Bishop Park, who lived in the Episcopal residence of Rodney, only twenty-five miles from Markham. Dean Randall's church was in his diocese, and the two men were on more than usually intimate terms. In fact, among the other recent letters to be found in Dean Randall's correspondence, was more than one from Bishop Park, assuring him of his, the Bishop's, support in the coming selection of a new bishop for the office soon to be vacant.

The Dean was in his study Friday morning, when the servant announced a caller, and the Dean, going out into the hall, was greeted by Bishop Park.

There was a moment of confusion on the Dean's face. But he quickly recovered himself, and when

his visitor was seated before him, in the study, he looked into his face very quietly, and waited for him to begin the conversation.

The Bishop was more embarrassed than the Dean. He was a large man, with a tendency to corpulence. His face was the face of an unusually good-natured, easy-going temperament. He was exceedingly popular with the clergy of his diocese. His intimacy with Dean Randall dated from college days.

"I suppose you know why I have come over this morning?" He asked the question very mildly, and with a smile which was as friendly as usual.

"You have heard of my new departure. I was just writing to you about it." The Dean pointed to his desk and a letter lying there.

"I do not need to tell you it is a most astonishing piece of news, Randall. In fact, it is so remarkable that I have come to verify it from your own lips. It is the last thing I ever expected from you."

"It is the last thing I ever expected of myself," the Dean replied with a voice and manner that the Bishop did not understand.

"Of course," continued the Bishop, with just a faint trace of irritation in his tone,—"of course you know that in giving this invitation to a minister of another denomination, you are violating one of the canons of the church. I do not need to remind so old a churchman as you are, of Canon 17, Title 1, of our Church Laws." The Bishop said it with the nearest approach to sarcasm he was ever known to use.

"Of course, that goes without saying," the Dean answered quietly.

"And, of course," continued the Bishop, looking at the Dean curiously, almost as if he expected to detect signs of mental failure in him, "you are familiar with the words of the 'Preface to the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, According to the Order of the Protestant and Episcopal Church in the United States of America as established in the year 1792?"

The Dean nodded gravely; and the Bishop, picking up a Prayer-Book which lay on a table near by, read somewhat mechanically from the appendix at the end of the Psalter—

"'And, therefore, to the intent that these orders (Bishops, Priests, and Deacons) may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in this church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal Consecration or Ordination.'"

The Bishop laid the Prayer-Book down, and looked over at the Dean, and there was a puzzled look on his good-natured face as he did so.

"Of course I know all that as well as I know the prayers themselves," said the Dean.

"Then it is impossible, my dear friend, that you can invite to preach in the pulpit of Grace Cathedral this Congregational minister. In suffering him to execute one of the functions of our church, namely, the preaching of the Word, you violate one of the

distinct and absolute laws of our church. You throw the established order of the church into confusion, and in doing so, you overthrow your own priestly order. It will lead to grave results, which I feel in duty bound to warn you of. In short,"—the Bishop had spoken with unusual earnestness,—"in short, my friend, your action in this matter is entirely lawless. It is the act of one who repudiates his own church and its rules. I am absolutely astonished when I consider you, of all men, disregarding this distinct and established canon of church authority."

The Dean's face was very white as the Bishop spoke. When he replied, it was with a voice which was under evident deep control.

"I realise the truth of all you have said. I have gone over all the ground you have travelled. But"—and the Dean looked straight at the Bishop—"as man to man, as Christian to Christian, Bishop Park, may there not come a time in a man's life when the canons, the customs, the laws of his church, even, shall be of less authority to him than a higher canon or law which God bids him follow? Are the laws of my church more binding on me than the laws of my conscience or my sense of what is deeply and vitally Christlike?"

The Bishop did not reply immediately. Over his usually easy look had crept a more deeply moved expression, which those who did not know him well never had seen there.

"I don't deny, Randall, that in many ways several of the old customs, even some of the canons of the Episcopal Church, have become obsolete. They are

no longer anything but traditions, even though they have not yet been revoked. But this canon in regard to the exercise of the church functions by other ministers is a vital church law. To disregard it is to cause a serious break in the established order of our church life."

"But can you tell me, Bishop, what possible harm can come to any one, if a good Christian man, of great usefulness as a minister, a man of long experience in the church, preaches the gospel standing in the pulpit of Grace Cathedral? He is as much a Christian disciple as you or I. He believes in the same teaching, and practises it in his daily life. He is going to the same heaven. He has the same gospel that you and I have. What possible harm can come from his preaching a sermon to my people in my church?"

"That is not the question at all," replied the Bishop, and again he showed signs of a little temper; "the question is purely one of our church canon. It is simply a question of whether you, an Episcopal clergyman, deliberately choose to make a law for yourself in defiance of the one which the church has laid down for you to follow. I do not question the Christian character of Mr. Procter. From all I know of him, he is a most worthy man. But if you invite him to preach in Grace Cathedral, you deliberately trespass on one of the established orders of the Episcopal Church. You cease to be a representative of that church. And you make yourself an example of lawless conduct in the church which will create confusion and trouble."

The Dean was silent. The great crisis of his life was on him. He knew it well.

"Be guided by me in this matter," the Bishop went on, misinterpreting the Dean's look. "You can ask to be excused from this hasty invitation. It may be true that people will not understand your change of mind, but the outside world does not understand the action of the Episcopal Church in this matter, anyway."

"I cannot go back now," replied the Dean in a low voice. "I have given the invitation to Brother Procter, and he has accepted it in good faith. What my future action may be, I do not know. I have thought I might go out of the church and even work elsewhere. I know well enough that what I have done makes me subject to a trial if I remain and still claim my standing with the clergy. It is possible I shall think it best to stay where I am and face such a trial for the purpose of testing the stability of the canon. I have for several years been growing to feel that even that law which forbids us to invite into our pulpits ministers of other denominations would in time cease to be regarded as vital. Great changes are coming into the life of the church everywhere. We are on the edge of many revolutions as regards established orders and dogmas and traditions. Christ's law is beginning to be felt as of more authority than church law. And when I compare His desire that His disciples might be one with the customs which have kept His disciples apart, I am conscience free in this matter of having invited his brother minister to speak in Christ's

name in a Christian church. I feel that it is right."

The Bishop was silent a long time after the Dean had finished. Then he said, speaking with a deliberation which the Dean could not help but notice—

"Of course, Randall, all this, you know well enough, makes any possible opportunity for you to receive the choice for the bishop's office out of the question. No man can expect to fill that place who deliberately disobeys a definite canon of the church."

"Of course, I have thought that all out," replied the Dean. For an instant his eyes rested on the picture of "Christ in Gethsemane." The Bishop did not know enough about that struggle of the Dean's to realise what his answer meant. Still, he knew that the Dean's ambition had been very strong in the direction of the bishopric.

Again that puzzled look came into the Bishop's eyes. In all his experience he had never had a similar case. The Dean's prominence in the church, his scholarly reputation, his long standing as a churchman, were sure to make his departure from the established rule marked. It was a case that could not be overlooked. What the final result would be, not even the Bishop was prepared to say.

At last he rose, still with the perplexed look that had grown deeper from the beginning of his interview with the Dean.

"Honestly, Randall, I fail to understand your action. It contradicts your whole life. Once more you must let me warn you that all this will cause

trouble, and harm the cause of the church. As you yourself have said, it will make you liable to trial for breach of the church discipline. As one of your best friends, I shall anticipate such a trial with great pain."

The Dean did not answer this. Somehow he felt that good as the Bishop was, he had not understood at all the deepest motive which had prompted that invitation sent to John Procter.

So the Bishop went back to his Episcopal residence very much disturbed in spirit. He was astonished, distressed, and, as far as his nature would allow, he was angry. Meanwhile, the people of Markham, no less puzzled at the Dean's action, awaited in deep interest the service which had been announced for Grace Cathedral, Sunday morning.

The evening of the same day which marked the visit of the Bishop to the Dean, which we have just recorded, was the occasion of an important meeting of the trustees of the Congregational Church.

It was the regular monthly business meeting, but of more than usual interest, on account of the burning of the church building, and the subject of rebuilding which, as a matter of course, was the principal subject to be discussed.

The occasion was so important that in anticipation of a congregational meeting the following week, the board of trustees had invited to confer with them the pastor, deacons, and all other church officers.

They met at the parsonage, and had been discussing for several minutes, in a general way, the proposition to rebuild the church.

"It's a very hard time, just now, to raise money," said Deacon Bruce, with a sigh. "Crops have failed, and business is very dull."

"That's so," added Mr. Rose, the chairman of the board. "Of course, our insurance will help us on the start, but it is not enough to put up such a building as we ought to have."

"If we build again, we ought to build of stone, instead of wood, it seems to me," remarked another member of the board.

"The Sunday-school rooms ought to be made more modern," said the superintendent. "That would mean at least a thousand dollars extra."

"We need at least seven thousand dollars to rebuild properly," added the church treasurer, who had been busily figuring up the items of cost.

John Procter had said very little so far. He had replied to questions, but had not ventured to make any remarks about the cost of a new building, or its size, or architecture.

"I would like to ask our pastor what he thinks about the kind of a building we ought to put up," finally interrupted the chairman. "He is more deeply interested, perhaps, than we are in the new church building."

All the faces turned towards John Procter. For fifteen years the church officers had consulted him repeatedly in matters that belonged to the business affairs of the parish, and his judgment and good sense had always been highly prized.

He looked around the little group of church people, and his look was very grave and thoughtful.

"The fact is, dear friends, that I have reached a conclusion in regard to a new church building that will, perhaps, astonish you. I have come to believe that it would be best for us not to rebuild at all, because there are too many church buildings in Markham already."

The entire group of church officers was smitten into astonished silence. They looked at John Procter with strangely excited faces. At last the chairman of the board managed to stammer, "Why, what, how do you mean, Mr. Procter? What can we do as a church if we have no building?"

"We can worship and work with some other church in Markham," replied John Procter calmly.

An astonished silence fell over the room. In the hush of that silence, if they had but known it, there was the first sign of a wonderful revolution in the established order of things that had so far governed the church life of Markham.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM HEARS A SERMON.

WHEN William Procter walked into the Episcopal Church of Pyramid the Sunday following his meeting with Francis Randall, he was prepared to criticise, in detail, everything he saw and heard. The spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction in him which had compelled him to leave the Seminary and give up the ministry had never been so strong in him as when he entered the pew which the usher showed him, and sat down to wait the few minutes before the service began.

He had attended the Episcopal service often while a student at Andover. Several times he had been in Boston and heard Phillips Brooks, uplifted and borne on by his great-hearted eloquence, which removed all criticism of the special forms of the church service itself.

But to-day William was in a mood which marks and magnifies trifles. He found himself sneering just a little at the robe which Randall wore when he appeared in the chancel.

He was tempted to criticise the singing of the choir, which was composed of young men and women, some of whom were unfamiliar with the music of the

service. He thought the frequent change from the sitting to a standing position savoured of hypocrisy and dead formality.

But gradually the spirit of the man in the pulpit began to affect William Procter differently. There was no cant or formality in the way Randall read the prayers and the collect. William Procter, while in the Seminary, had committed most of the prayers in the Episcopal Prayer-Book to memory, and honestly thought them very beautiful. He was compelled to acknowledge that Randall read them uncommonly well. In fact, he did not read them so much as say them. As he followed the words silently, calling them up in memory, William Procter found himself asking if he himself could have put as much real feeling and meaning into the same sentences if he had to repeat them every Sunday morning the year around.

So it came about that when the sermon was reached, William Procter had almost unconsciously passed into a spirit of ready acceptance of the truth, and his critical, dissatisfied mind was for the time being disposed to receive what the preacher had to give, if he had anything to give that was worth while.

But Randall had not been preaching very long before William Procter found himself thoroughly aroused, and that, too, in a way he had not known since he first entered the Seminary.

The sermon was vitally practical. It was simply a call to the Christian men and women of Pyramid to do something in the matter of removing the gambling saloons that filled Pyramid with crime and

disorder. There was nothing old-fashioned or formal or clerical in the way Randall called attention to the need of a better town. He had made himself master of the facts, and among them was a list of the older boys and young men who were frequenters of the gambling dens. He did not read the names, but he gave the number, and plainly said that among them were boys from some of the families sitting in the church that morning. When he said it, a wave of intense feeling swept through the little church, and more than one father and mother bowed the head.

There were two sentences in the sermon near the close, that smote on William Procter's mind like a blow.

"Any man living in Pyramid to-day who has anything of Christianity in him is a coward, and is faithless to his Lord and Master, Jesus, if he does not do all in his power to help remove this gambling curse. No man has any right to say it is none of his business, or shirk his own responsibility in this matter."

They were simple sentences, but they rankled in William Procter's mind, and would not give him any rest.

He slipped out of the church service before any one could detain him, and went to his little room in the boarding-house near the mill. The sermon was not at all what he had expected. He had imagined he might hear some kind of a churchly discourse on one of the Jewish sinners of the Old Testament, with two or three moral lessons to be

drawn from their evil behaviour. But this uncompromising call to Christian duty was unexpected. He had enough of the old Pilgrim blood in him to be unable to remain quiet and satisfied when such a call sounded in his ears. The sense of duty was too keen and deep in him to be easily turned aside or bid to keep silent.

What had he done? It is true he had conscientiously left the ministry because he could not honestly preach in a pulpit. But had he also abandoned all his Christian faith, and cut loose from all responsibility for the salvation of the world? What business was it of his that gambling dens in Pyramid cursed the young men of the place? Could he leave his work in the mill to fight such an evil? It was a part of all mining camps. It was an evil that could not be attacked without great personal danger. What did Randall want to get entangled in any such thankless reform business for? Why couldn't he go on and preach in a general way against sin, and let this particular sin alone?

He had not been so stirred up over anything since he had written that letter to his father in the Seminary.

When he entered the mill the next morning, he was unable to shake off the burden of responsibility which Randall's sermon had laid upon him. In a spirit of mingled anger and self-reproach, he went about his duties in the mill. And the roar and rattle and heat of the grim mixer, as it entered the white-hot furnace where the ore was burning, and emerged again to travel its circular track, was not

able to drown the voice of that old religious conviction of personal responsibility for the sin of others which now burned white-hot in the soul of the assistant superintendent of the Golconda Mill.

But there was more in that call of Randall's to Christian duty, than even William Procter felt or knew. The sermon that day was a part of the whole experience through which the young Episcopal clergyman was moving. Events had come on rapidly since he had invited Mr. Clark, the Congregational minister, into his pulpit, and the campaign he was now entering for a cleaner municipal life was only a part of the new church life he was beginning to know.

Two short letters written by him at this time reveal the inward passion of the man. The first was to his father :—

DEAR FATHER,—I have already told you of Mr. Clark's preaching in the church here. I have not told you of the result. One of my wardens, one of the oldest men in the church, has had several talks with me about that occurrence. Of course, I violated the church canon, as you have written me. I did so, knowing what it might mean. My people here, for the most part, have not objected, seriously. My Bishop has written me inquiring into it, and I have replied, giving him the whole truth about it. Now, my warden, Mr. Cole, says that he cannot overlook such a departure from the church rules, and feels obliged to make complaint to the Bishop, who, in his reply to my letter, simply warned me to be more careful and not to offend again. But the nature of the mining camp and the unconventional manner in which a great deal of church work must be done, accounts, in large part, for the Bishop's leniency. I do not have any fears of the final result. If a trial should come, my only defence would be, of course, a

higher law than the church canon. I cannot persuade myself that I have done anything unchristian. I may have acted contrary to the established canon of the Episcopal Church, but I feel sure I am not acting contrary to the real spirit and desire of my only Master, Christ.

I am at present in the midst of a campaign against the gambling dens of Pyramid. If the Christian people here all act together, we can win. The main trouble is that some of the prominent business men, the mine-owners and mill-owners, especially Sewell, the owner of the Golconda, are opposed to the move to outlaw the gamblers because of business complications. Sewell himself told me bluntly the other day that he considered the gambling dens a part of any mining camp, and violently expressed himself as opposed to touching them or helping the movement for their destruction. This sounds almost incredible, but you yourself are familiar with business men's arguments that saloons and houses of vice are necessary to the business interests of a town.

I have met William Procter, who is assistant superintendent in Sewell's mill. He was at church last Sunday. I wish I knew something of his experience which led to his leaving the Seminary. He seems shy, and I shall not attempt to presume on his acquaintance unless he invites it.

Love to mother and yourself, and all the Markham friends.—Your son, FRANCIS.

This letter was written a week before news reached Pyramid of Dean Randall's invitation to John Procter. Hence there was no allusion to it in the son's letter to the Dean.

The other letter sent from Pyramid that week was addressed to Miss Jane Procter.

After the words, "Miss Jane Procter," came the words written underneath:—

DEAR JANE,—In your reply to my last letter, you did not refuse to allow me to write again. Of course, you know well

enough I can never write you but one kind of a letter. It would be simply clear hypocrisy for me to sit down and write you descriptions of the mining camp of Pyramid, of the snow mountains in the range beyond, or the milling machinery. How could I write anything of that sort when there is only one great desire in my heart, and that is for you yourself. You must let me say again, Jane, that if you do love me, as I sometimes really believe you do, you are wrong to live your life apart from me, but it is no excuse for you to give that you cannot marry a minister. You could help me as no other woman in all the world could do. Your familiarity with church life, gained in the atmosphere of it at your own home, has fitted you for all that I have to do, for the two churches are not at all unlike, when it comes to the real work which needs to be done.

You cannot know, Jane, the hunger of my heart for you, even if you do, perhaps, think I am so stupid that I cannot take "No" for an answer. But your answers, so far, have not made any difference with my feelings. If I were a young woman, Jane, I would not think much of a young man who was my lover, who was afraid to tell her several times that he loved her, even if she did say once or twice that she would not marry him. And you ought to know by this time, Jane, that I love you dearly. There is one great hope I have with me always, and that is, you have never told me outright that you do not love me. As long as you don't tell me that, I shall still go on telling you what I have written here.—Your lover,

FRANCIS RANDALL.

When Jane had read this letter through, she buried her face on it for just a moment, and when she lifted it again, her cheeks were very red, and there was a tear on one of them. She took up the letter and re-read it, then there was a tear on the other cheek, and finally a smile.

"He certainly has the gift of persistence," she said. But she said it almost as if she were very glad of it.

Then she sat quietly going over all the past. The struggle between her lover and her lifelong distaste for the minister's life was becoming an old struggle now, but it was by no means settled.

"I cannot marry a minister, I cannot, I cannot," she repeated to herself. And yet in the repetition of the old phrase she began to feel that she was stifling the noblest feeling in her, and perhaps refusing the best gift any true man ever has to offer a true woman. If the ministry, in her thought of it, had presented very little that was grand or glorious for a young man and his wife, was Francis Randall's ministry lacking in heroic elements that could attract almost any woman? She had already learned to prize his love. What if in time she should lose it? Besides—— But even when she had put this last letter away with the others, she murmured "No, I cannot." If Francis Randall had heard her then, he might almost have lost the hope he maintained. But he might have regained it again if he had seen Jane a moment later, before she started off to school, bury her face in her hands and cry a little, no one being near to note it.

The Sunday morning in Markham that followed the events of that week, which had brought these experiences to William Procter and Jane, had been eagerly anticipated by the people of nearly all the churches. It was the morning that John Procter was to preach in Dean Randall's pulpit, and it must be said that many of the members of the other churches deserted their own services to go to the Episcopal Church.

A great many exciting rumours had agitated the town of Markham during the week. It was said that the Bishop had been to see Dean Randall about the matter of his invitation to John Procter, and that high words had passed between them. It was even whispered, by some, that the two men had almost come to blows. The members of Grace Cathedral parish were greatly excited over the event; but the prominence of the Dean, his long good standing in the community, and a certain unquestioned curiosity to see how matters would come out, had prevented any outspoken opposition. It was true, however, so it was rumoured, that the Dean's unheard-of action would not pass unchallenged by the vestry.

In addition to all this, there was an immense curiosity aroused by rumours of the meeting held Friday night by the officers of John Procter's church. It was said by some that he had advised his board of trustees to disband the Congregational Church altogether, and unite with the Baptists. Others said the meeting Friday night had ended in a sharp quarrel between the pastor and his church officers, and that he had immediately tendered his resignation. It was definitely known beyond any question, that a meeting of the entire congregation had been called for the following Monday night, and that at that time some very interesting and unusual affairs would be discussed. The meeting, through the courtesy of the Presbyterians, was to be held in their church.

It was therefore with an unparalleled interest that the service began that morning in Grace Cathedral.

The building was not large, and it was as crowded as if a fashionable wedding were taking place in it. People stood up during the entire service, the little vestibule was packed with people looking over one another's shoulders and standing on tiptoe trying to look over, while many from the other churches, who came a little late, were unable to find even standing-room. Instead of going to their own churches, most of these people stood about the little yard in front of Grace Cathedral, discussing the events of the week.

It had been arranged between the Dean and John Procter that the Dean should conduct all of the service except the sermon. When the Dean came to the desk, as usual, and began the service with the words, "The Lord is in His holy temple," John Procter, seated just behind the Dean, unable to see his face, yet caught the truth of its expression from the people in front of him. Besides, had not he and the Dean just been kneeling together in the little room at the side of the chancel? The event, small as it may seem when considered by itself, was yet full of serious meaning to both men. To say that it marked an epoch in the lives of each would be saying too little. It marked an epoch no less in the lives of their churches, and no man present at that service could imagine what the end might be.

The service proceeded in the usual manner so far as the prayers, responses, and choir chants were concerned. But it approached the part of the sermon with a very unusual feeling on the part of the congregation. It is safe to say that when John Procter at last rose to preach, he had for attentive hearers every

one in the church, and all of them brought to that attentive hearing a sensitiveness of religious feeling which too often is wanting in a listening congregation.

John Procter's subject, which he announced at once, was one that easily held people's attention. It was, "What would Jesus do if He were a member of a church to-day?"

The answer to this question revealed to every one present some very simple but vital truths. It was John Procter's aim to present a simple but true phase of church membership, what it really meant. He did not go outside of Markham. The application was direct, and largely left to the people to make for themselves.

As he went on, the impression of the simple truth deepened. Even the people standing up in the vestibule farthest from the speaker felt the seriousness and truth of the message. It is certain that nearly every one present felt that his understanding of church membership had been enlarged, and to many there it was impossible to go on with the old narrow definition in the future.

People remained bowed even longer than usual, at the close of that service. It seemed to the two ministers as they went into the little room by the chancel where the Dean took off his robe, that a baptism like that of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost had fallen on the people.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN PROCTER'S PROPOSITION.

"THAT was a beautiful message you brought to us," said the Dean, as he faced John Procter in the little room.

John Procter looked at the Dean thoughtfully.

"I was very anxious to give the people something helpful."

"You did. It helped me." The Dean spoke simply, but in a tone that moved John Procter deeply.

"I do not need to say that this morning's experience has been, in many ways, the most remarkable I have ever known in my ministry, Dean Randall. I am sure you know very well how deeply I feel the fellowship you have extended to me. Although," John Procter continued, with a little hesitation, "I do not know all it may cost you."

"I have counted it," said the Dean gravely. Then he added, "You are passing through a new experience in your own church. You are really not going to build again?"

The Dean asked the question with a degree of excusable curiosity.

"I shall advise my people not to build, but unite with one of the other churches," replied John Procter frankly. "When the time comes, I want your advice and counsel in the matter."

"You shall have it, gladly," the Dean replied. They were about to pass out of the side door, when John Procter said, "Neighbour, shall we have a prayer together before we go?"

It may seem altogether impossible, but it was a fact that for several years Dean Randall had not prayed aloud any prayers except those printed in the Prayer-Book. His case was, perhaps, exceptional. But the fact must be recorded as it really was. That morning, before the service, it is true that, moved by a common impulse, he had kneeled with John Procter for a moment, but the prayer had been silent.

Now he knelt down again beside his neighbour, and John Procter prayed very simply but tenderly for a blessing on all the churches in Markham, that they might more truly fulfil Christ's desire for them that they might be one. When he had said Amen, there was a curious silence for a moment before the Dean uttered a word. Then he found his petition naturally following that of John Procter. Is there anything except the most Christian act in the praying of two of Christ's disciples in the language that springs from the heart's desire? And yet the Dean, to his own astonishment, found the act so full of newness, and even unusual habit, that he could not for days break away from the thought of its unique place in his religious experience. For it is

simply a fact that never before that day had he joined with a minister of another denomination in a common prayer for a common blessing upon the work of Christ in the town where his work was being carried on. Is it any more than a thing to be expected that two Christian men, disciples of the same Lord, should meet often to pray for His kingdom on earth? Is it true that the remarkable absence of such united petition is one of the causes of the weakness of Jesus' disciples in the earth two thousand years after His prayer that they might be one?

When Monday night came, the members of the Congregational Church of Markham, in response to the notice given out on Sunday, met in the Presbyterian Church to discuss the subject of rebuilding. News of the remarkable proposition made at the trustee meeting by the pastor had reached nearly every member. The entire membership, with the exception of a few of the old and sick, was present. Not since the organisation of the church in Markham had so much excitement been known at a church meeting. What the outcome of it would be, no one could tell.

John Procter presided at the meeting, as his usual custom had been. The first thing to be called for was the report of the trustee meeting, Friday night.

The chairman of the board, Mr. Rose, gave, in brief, the result of that meeting.

"We met," he said, "to discuss the subject of rebuilding. We talked over plans and expense. There was some difference of opinion on the part

of the trustees and church officers as to the kind of building we ought to put up. Nearly all of us agreed that it is an unusually hard time just now to raise money. But there was no thought in the mind or speech of any of us as to the necessity of building some kind of a church, until our pastor was asked to give his advice. What he said then was so unexpected, and we were so little prepared to entertain his view, that after a discussion which resulted in nothing more satisfactory, it was voted by the board to lay the whole matter before the entire church, and have it discussed by the entire membership. The pastor's proposition is now known to you. I would, of course, much prefer to have him explain to the church what he said to us Friday night."

The chairman, after a moment of hesitation, sat down, and every one looked intently at John Procter. For fifteen years the members of the Congregational Church of Markham had trusted and respected him, and while they were astonished beyond measure at what they had heard of the meeting Friday night, they were still ready to listen to their pastor in explanation of his strange plan. They therefore leaned forward, and in a very grave silence waited for him to speak.

He rose and looked at his people thoughtfully before he said anything. The occasion marked a crisis for him and them.

"What I said to the board Friday night was this: I do not think we ought to rebuild our church. Instead of doing that, we can better

work and worship with some other church in Markham.

"I do not expect such a proposition as that, of course, to be accepted by the church at once, or without very grave and serious consideration. It is due to you that I give my own reasons for advising such a movement on our part.

"There are already twelve churches in Markham, and twelve ministers. The population of the town gives less than two hundred people to each church. Our own membership is one hundred and twenty. The Presbyterians here have a membership of about the same. None of the other churches in the town has over one hundred members. Nearly every church in town is burdened with a debt. None of them pays over one thousand dollars' salary to its minister.

"Brethren, those are the plain facts about the churches in Markham, as I stated them to the board Friday night during our discussion. Now, will you let me try to show, in a concise way, what advantages will be found for us and for the town, by uniting with some one of the other churches already organised in Markham?

"I have put down here in writing, for the sake of exactness, a number of points which contain, in brief, my own convictions.

"1. If we unite with some other church, instead of rebuilding and going on with our own separate organisation, we shall strengthen the church to which we go. Let us take, just for the example, the Presbyterian Church here. Suppose we should unite

with them. They would feel the addition of a working force and a congregation. There would come at once to preacher and people the inspiration of numbers. The financial support of the church work would also be materially increased.

"2. There is nothing in the doctrinal creed of hardly any church in Markham that would forbid a real union of our church with them on a Christian basis. There is nothing in the Presbyterian Church here, for example, which is in any way essentially different from our own.

"3. The moral effect of our voluntary union with another church would be very great on our own community, and more than that on the Christian world. It is well known to most of you that the most serious obstacle to church life in Markham is the multiplication of church organisations. The business men are constantly complaining that they are besought by every church in town to give it support. The complaint is well founded. It ought not to be impossible for them to make it. It is almost a standing sneer in Markham that if a stranger or a new family moves into town and cannot find the particular denomination they prefer, they can easily start another. Our union with some other church will do much towards removing this sneer. The effect of it on the outside world will be very helpful. Most of you do not know, as I do, what a load the minister, and the church too, have to carry on account of this minute splitting up into fragments of the body of Christ.

"4. Markham would really be better off in every

way if its twelve churches were reduced to six or even four. If we set the example, it is impossible to say what some of the other churches also may do in uniting their divided forces.

"5. In spite of the number of churches now in Markham, the moral life of the town is not growing, but decreasing. Our union with another church will undoubtedly give us greater power in the direction of a moral force to better things. The whole effect of such a union will, no doubt, be to awaken a more Christian life in our own membership and that of the church to which we go.

"6. If our church unites with some other, I firmly believe it will be to the great joy of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. For two thousand years He has been waiting for a final answer to His prayer that His disciples might be one. The sight of one church in Markham voluntarily and gladly uniting with another for the purpose of strengthening the kingdom on earth will make joy in heaven. If Jesus were here to-day, it is my deep conviction that He would advise you to do just what I am urging now.

"7. Our union with another church will, without doubt, be followed by a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Of this, I have not the slightest question. The movement will be so directly in keeping with the Divine will, that a new baptism of spiritual life will fall upon us all. It is long since we had such a baptism of life. We need it more than we need anything else.

"8. If we unite with another church, we shall be directly in line with the spirit of federation of churches

which is moving over Christendom to-day. Never before in the history of the church was there such a true longing on the part of the Christian world to get together. The action of Dean Randall in opening his church to us yesterday is only one of the indications of many that the old customs and traditions of sectarianism are vanishing. Never before did the great church conventions, councils, and state and national gatherings of all the denominations contain so much written and spoken for the union of Christ's disciples. We are actually at the beginning of a mighty and irresistible movement which nothing can prevent. Whether we act or not to join our Christian life with that of another body, the world movement for church union is already started by a Diviner and more victorious power than we can command or oppose. But it will be a glorious thing for us to be in the current of that tide at the start. It will be the best part of our history as a church to write this chapter into our annals. Instead of being the death of our church, it will really be the beginning of the best life it has ever felt."

When John Procter finished reading from his paper, the silence remained unbroken. The members of the Congregational Church of Markham were not able to say anything for a long time. Nothing like this had ever happened before. No such proposition had ever been put before them. They were bewildered by it. There were some of the older members, however, who had followed the pastor's reading with sober and even angry opposition. One of these was the first to break the silence.

"Mr. Procter," he said, rising and speaking in a tone that betrayed great excitement and feeling, "you have not told us in all this astonishing plan of yours, what you propose to do with the pastor of the church: or what you propose the church to do with him. If our church unites with another, one of them will have to give up its minister. If we were to unite with the Presbyterians here, as you say, for example, do you suppose their minister would be willing to step out, or his people be willing to have his place filled by another man? There are too many practical business difficulties in the way of such a union as you propose."

The member sat down, and again the church people all turned eagerly towards John Procter.

"I have believed for a long time," he said, after a moment, "that there were too many churches in Markham. But I do not believe there are too many ministers. Brother Walker, how many men are there employed in the bank where you are now?"

"Four," replied Mr. Walker, the member who had just spoken.

"Yes. There is a cashier, a teller, a bookkeeper, and a janitor — four men on salary to do the necessary business of the bank. There is not a grocery store in Markham that does not employ at least one clerk to take orders and drive a delivery waggon. There is not a general merchandise store that does not have at least two or three paid helpers. Every department of business in Markham has paid help in proportion to the volume of its business. Now, as matters are at present, it is true that there

are twice as many church buildings and organisations as Markham needs. But it is not over-supplied with Christian men to do the necessary Christian work. What I mean is that if we could reduce the number of churches in Markham to six, we would still have use for twelve ministers. That would not be at all out of proportion to the need of religious work to be done. If we should unite with the Presbyterians, there will still be enough for both Brother Cameron and myself to do. No minister with a church membership of two hundred people in a community like ours ever can do alone all that ought to be done. I am of the opinion that in time the churches will all employ more men to do their work. No other business is ever done in the world as the churches do theirs. If the work of a bank requires four men, it generally has four men. But the pastor of a church is generally supposed to take care of all its business alone, no matter how fast it grows or its needs increase. Thousands of churches in the United States that began with less than one hundred members, have grown to have three or four hundred members. But in very few cases have the churches increased their paid workers with the increase in numbers and responsibility. They still continue to employ only one man, and expect him to do the work in a church of three or four hundred just the same as he did when it was only one hundred. A bank or a grocery store that tried to keep abreast of its increasing business in that way would soon fail. One reason why a good many churches are weak is not because the minister is incapable, but because

the church does not employ more help. So, in case we should unite with the Presbyterians, there will be found some way to keep both of us ministers at work. That is to say, there will be no trouble about having two ministers in the church, if only the church realises the value of the work to be done for this town."

Again there was a long silence in the room. If the pastor had not gone into the details of the work that two ministers might do in the one church, he had, at least, made it seem within the reach of possibility that two men might with advantage be employed.

John Procter spoke again.

"I know, of course, that what I have proposed is so strange to many of you that you are not prepared to take any action on it at this meeting. But, strange and unusual and even impossible as it may seem to you at first, I still hope you will take time to consider it."

"We certainly cannot act on this at once," said one of the deacons, an elderly man who had been a member of the Congregational Church of Markham for over forty years.

He was going on to express his opinion as to the wisdom of such a remarkable movement, and several others were evidently now ready to say something, when some one down near the door came forward with a telegram for John Procter.

It was marked "Great Haste." "The boy is at the door, and will take your answer," said the man who had come up to the pulpit with the message.

The deacon paused a moment until the interruption at the platform was over.

John Procter opened the envelope and read the message. It was from Pyramid, and dated late that evening. It read as follows:—

REV. JOHN PROCTER,
MARKHAM, O.

William has met with very serious accident in mill. Come on at once. FRANCIS RANDALL.

John Procter read this over twice before he realised what it meant, as people generally read serious telegrams.

He rose, pale but self-possessed, and told his people what the news was.

"I shall have time to leave for the West on the midnight express," he said. As he passed down through the aisle of the church to hurry home with the news, more than one hand was thrust out to express sympathy.

It had all happened so unexpectedly, that the congregation remained in a condition of uncertainty when the door closed on their pastor.

The deacon spoke. He had been one of the first to say God-speed to John Procter as he started down the aisle.

"We can't settle this question of church building to-night. We need to think it over carefully. I move that we spend the rest of the time in prayer for the pastor and his family."

The deacon's motion was carried, and the church, stirred by a sympathy which was the outcome of

genuine affection for their pastor, offered many earnest prayers for him and all those who were dear to him. It is not at all impossible that the accident to William Procter, and the prayers in his behalf, had a good deal to do with the final result of affairs in Markham, so far as the Congregational Church was concerned. There are no accidents in the plans of God.

CHAPTER IX.

AT WORK IN THE MILL.

SINCE the sermon of Francis Randall on the responsibility of the Christian men of Pyramid for the closing of the gambling saloons of the camp, William Procter had not attended service in any church. He had not yet settled the question of his own responsibility in the matter. He kept saying to himself that he had not come out to Pyramid to do the work of a missionary or a reformer. At the same time, he knew well enough that he was like hundreds of other men, who, when they move West, or East, find it easy to shirk religious duties because they think people do not know them, and the opportunity is a good one to take a holiday from all Christian work. Very often this holiday lasts the rest of a man's life.

William Procter was not satisfied with the situation, however. He went to his mill duties every morning discontented and restless, half angry at Randall, and miserable generally because of his personal experience, which had driven him into a life of physical toil for which he was, by nature and training, poorly educated. At present, not least among the troubles which assailed him, was his memory of those days in

Andover, when the woman he loved had broken with him because of her disappointment at his refusal to continue in a profession which his conscience would not allow him to enter. With bitterness of spirit he fought against the feeling which he still had for her. He had tried to forget, but his efforts had been useless. Memory was stronger and more tenacious than oblivion.

So he went about among the strange pieces of machinery in the Golconda Mill, thinking over all these things, and a strange mixture of human passions and struggles in the midst of weird and clashing monsters of iron and steel and poisonous vats and tanks of chemicals. There was a twelve-inch board across the top of one of the large cyanide vats over which the men in the mill often walked to reach another part of the building. It saved a journey around by way of a pair of steps and a ladder, and the men were in the habit of crossing by means of this plank, although they knew well enough that a slip and a plunge into the poisonous fluid would mean death. They had become so used to it that in their rough way they often calculated on the length of time a man might survive if he fell into the vat, even supposing he was a good swimmer and help was not far off.

Once on that day, on the evening of which his father had received the telegram, William Procter, as he crossed this narrow plank, had a curious feeling that an easy accident would put an end to all his mental troubles. There was only a twelve-inch plank between death and life. He had this thought

come to him when just over the middle of the tank. In an instant it flashed into him, with all the force of his inherited Pilgrim steadiness of moral character, that what he was entertaining was nothing short of suicide. Many a man has committed it for less reason than William Procter could give. He suddenly ran across the plank, trembling, and when once on the other side he was seized with a faintness that compelled him to sit down at the foot of the vat. He did not cross the board again that day.

All this was in the morning. He had come into the mill at ten o'clock. His duties kept him continuously at work until seven o'clock in the evening, when a new shift came on. The mill was running night and day to fill orders, and everything in it, including the men, was taxed to its fullest capacity.

It was between six and seven o'clock that William was called into the furnace-room to help one of the men there who was engaged in repairing a part of the track on which the two mixers continually travelled on their circular way. The work of the mill was too valuable to be stopped, so the repairing went on while the red-hot mixer plunged into its fiery bath with a clanging of metal doors which closed behind it to protect the fires and emerged again with the same crash of iron on iron when the carriage, white-hot from its invisible and awful journey through the blast, broke out of its prison and flung itself around the circle of steel rails, withering everything with its intense heat, and, as evening came on, filling the narrow room with a light that glowed remorselessly from its blades and arms. Often, to William, stand-

ing fascinated in the presence of this strange metal monster, pressing back against the walls of the mill to keep from being hit by it, it seemed that the thing was alive and conscious, and waiting only its time to fling itself off the track that held it, upon a man, and strike him down with its murderous white-hot fists, and kill him for pleasure.

He crawled under the track where the other man was trying to screw a bolt into a part of the iron foundation on which the track rested. When the mixer passed over them, it seemed to William Procter as if the heat would suffocate him. He wondered at the stolid endurance of the furnace-men, who moved about in the unnatural heat and worked in such places as this for hours.

The two men worked hard, panting with the heat, and scorched, now and then, with the fine particles of ore dust which fell from the mixers, as they crossed the track in turn above them. But after working several minutes they were not able to screw the bolt into its place.

"You will have to go into the tool-house and get the large wrenches," William said to his companion. He could have gone himself, but for the moment he felt some compassion on the man who had been at work longer than usual in his cramped position.

The man crawled out from under the track, and William was left alone. He waited until the heat became so unbearable that he finally crept out and went over at the side of the furnace-room to wait for the man to come back.

It is not very clear how it happened, for no one

was in the furnace-room on that side at the time. It seemed probable, from William's own disconnected account afterwards, that he had started to go from the place where he first stood to one of the doors. He was probably absent-minded, thinking over his troubles, going over his old struggle as to his personal responsibility.

However that may be, in the dusk, lighted by the glow of the two mixers as they alternately burst from the furnace, a terrible thing happened.

The machine at last had met its opportunity. One of the long metal arms, above the stirring blades, caught the sleeve of William's blouse as he walked along.

He came to himself in an instant, and, realising his great danger, he reached out his other hand to loosen his sleeve. It was burning, but the long, pointed piece of metal had been thrust through the tough cloth, and he was unable to pull his arm loose at once. He could feel the red-hot iron burning into the flesh, but he still kept his self-possession, as he walked along by the machine and strained with all his might. He probably would have succeeded in breaking away, but just then his foot struck the tool which the man had dropped on the floor when he went out.

He stumbled and fell forward. In doing so he tore his arm away from the mixer, but fell behind it full upon the circular track, striking his head upon the after part of the mixer as he fell.

He was now in the path of the other mixer, which had just entered the furnace. The time between the

two mixers was about twenty-five seconds. The furnace-room was still empty. The workman had not returned. And there lay the form of a man, insensible, already badly burned, full across the track.

The second machine rumbled out of the furnace and rolled down, grim and terrible, towards its victim. It almost seemed as if the monster thought. Still the room was empty, except for that quiet form, lying there across the track. One hand feebly moved. The head stirred a little. A breath of the cool evening from the hills blew into the open door, and even gained a little into the blast of the heat over the track. In a few seconds the man will be conscious again.

But William Procter still lay there, and the mixer almost upon him, when a man stepped through the open door and looked into the mill.

In the triumphant glow of the advancing machine he saw the form of the man on the track. With a cry, he leaped up astride the track, lifted up the body, and leaped down again with it. As he did so, one of the mixing blades swept its red-hot side against his hand, burning the whole back of it to a blister.

But without noticing that, he staggered with his burden to the open door, and laid the form down quietly, resting the head upon the door sill.

Then he cried aloud for help. Men came running across the yard and through the furnace-room.

The man who had saved William's life looked up as he kneeled by the side of the still unconscious body.

"Bring some water! Run for the company's doctor, some one! He is in the assayer's office. I just left him there as I came by."

Two men ran in obedience to these orders, given sharply but quietly.

When the doctor came, William was just regaining his senses. The first face he saw was Francis Randall's.

"What's the matter?" he asked feebly.

"You're hurt a little, but the doctor's here. We are going to take you home," said Randall gently.

William fainted again. The men improvised a rude stretcher and carried him over to his boarding-place, the doctor going along with Randall.

"Is he badly hurt, doctor?" asked Randall, as he walked along in the dusk, behind the little procession. As he walked, he silently wrapped his handkerchief about his hand.

"His right arm is burned to the bone. That burn on his face is a deep one. He must have fallen full force upon the mixer. Did you see the accident? How did it happen?"

"I found him lying unconscious across the track," answered Randall.

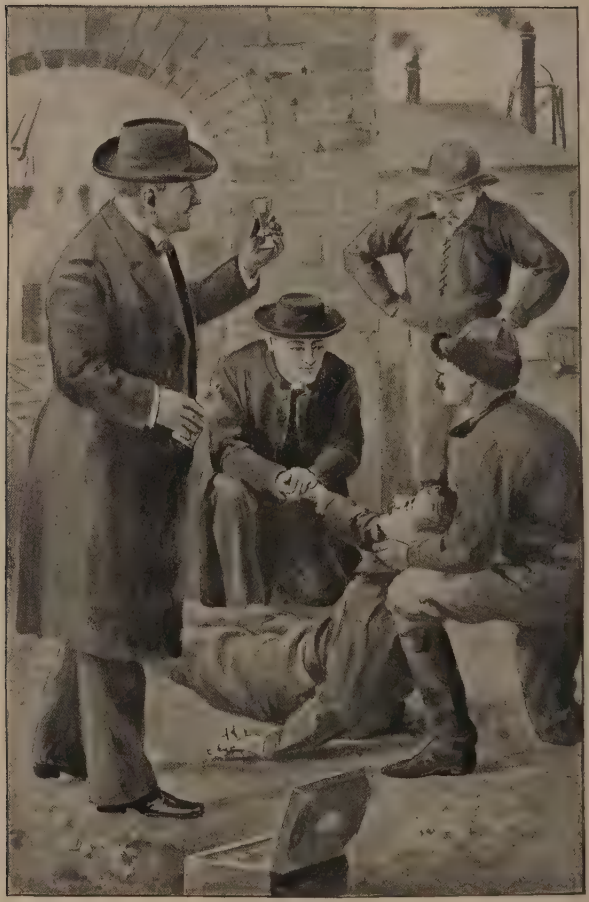
"Did you?" asked the doctor, peering curiously at Randall through the dusk.

"Yes," replied Randall. The doctor waited to hear more, but Randall was silent.

"You must have carried him from the track to the door?" asked the doctor, after a pause.

"Yes. He is not very heavy," replied Randall.

"Humph!" grunted the doctor. But he was



THE FIRST FACE HE SAW WAS FRANCIS RANDALL'S.

p. 102.

used to accidents of all sorts, and asked no more questions.

The doctor was busy with William for over an hour. Francis Randall stayed in the little room, to be of help, if it was needed. Once he went out and asked the woman who kept the house to give him some flour to put on his hand. When he came back, the doctor noticed the bandage for the first time.

"You're hurt yourself, Mr. Randall?"

"A little; I burned my hand."

"Let me see it," cried the doctor a little roughly.

Randall hesitated at first, and then, smiling a little, uncovered the wound.

The doctor looked at the wound and then at the clergyman, but said nothing. Randall replaced the covering.

"How is he?" he asked, looking toward the still unconscious form on the bed.

"To tell the truth, he is in bad shape. If he has any relatives or friends who ought to be sent for, the quicker the better."

"I know his people," said Randall sadly. "I'll telegraph, if you say so."

"You'd better. I think the chances are against him. He is badly hurt in the head. If he were my boy, I should want to see him as soon as possible."

So that is how it came about that Francis Randall tore down the hill to the railroad station, and the message was sent flying over the states to Rev. John Procter, of Markham.

He hurried home from that eventful meeting of his church and broke the news to his wife and Jane.

Mrs. Procter looked at her husband, and instantly said—

"We will both go to him."

Jane cried to go also, but even in the excitement being made by her father and mother, she finally agreed with them that it would not be best. Her mother could do all that was necessary. It would only add to the expense if Jane went, and it could not help William any.

She quietly helped her mother to prepare for the journey. As they were packing a valise, Mrs. Procter suddenly asked her husband—

"How did it happen that Francis Randall sent the telegram?"

"I don't know any more about it than you do. It was signed by him. That is all I know."

"It is strange. Mrs. Randall showed me one of his last letters from Pyramid, in which he wrote of meeting William, but said that Will was shy and he would not intrude on him, so I had supposed the two seldom met."

"We shall learn all about it when we get there. The Lord spare our son——"

John Procter nearly broke down. When Jane finally kissed them good-bye, she bravely kept up courage and cheered the father and mother with words of hope, but when they had gone she turned back into the parsonage and cried hard. The telegram had been left on the table; she took it up and read it again. Somehow, the sight of Francis Randall's name at the end of the solemn message comforted her. William was already with a friend.

That was worth something to her, as she pictured the father and mother speeding West.

During the days that followed, Jane suffered more than the others from the suspense and anxiety. There had come a telegram, announcing their arrival and the fact that William was yet alive. But then followed a waiting of several days. A postal card from her father, written each day, simply announced that William was living, but no change yet. Then, at last, came a letter from her mother, the reading of which brought the colour into Jane's face and made her heart beat with a variety of emotions. Along with the letter were two copies of the Pyramid daily paper, marked.

Jane read both the letter and the marked article in the paper one evening after supper. A friend of hers, one of the other teachers, had been staying with her, and was present in the room. After reading the letter, Jane asked her friend if she would like to hear the news from Pyramid.

"Yes, by all means."

"My voice may tremble a little," said Jane, who was unusually excited, "but you will excuse it when you hear what mother has written."

PYRAMID, COL.

DEAR JANE,—I write with a glad heart to-day. Will is out of danger. The crisis in his favour was reached and passed last night. The Lord has given me strength far beyond my expectation, and while I have lost a great deal of sleep, I am well and happy. The dear boy is terribly worn by his illness, but this morning he knew your father and me, and sent his love to you.

I cannot tell you what a wonderful help Francis Randall has been to us during all this experience. We did not learn until we had been here a week, how much we owed to him for saving Will's life. I have not yet been inside of one of the reduction ore mills, but your father, who visited the one where Will was hurt, gave me a very graphic picture of it.

There is an immense furnace where the crushed ore, as fine as flour, is roasted. While it is being roasted, two great machines with ploughs, or stirrers, enter the furnace and stir the ore to bring it all evenly in contact with the fire and the air. These machines travel on a circular track, and enter and leave the furnace at equal distances.

It seems that Will, in some way (he is not clear about it himself) stumbled and fell over this circular track, and was burned terribly in doing so. In falling, he struck his head on the machine, and lay across the track unconscious. The other machine had come, white-hot, out of the furnace, and was almost upon him, when Francis Randall, who happened to be going by the mill that evening, on his way from the company doctor's, saw the body on the track, jumped up in front of the mixer, and lifted Will down, so saving his life, for if he had been struck by the monstrous machine it would have burned him to death.

Francis Randall did not tell us all this in this way, but we found out that what he did was even more heroic than I know how to tell it. He received a dreadful burn on his right hand; the whole back of it was burned to a crisp. The doctor says he will always carry a great scar. It will be a very honourable one, and we certainly, as a family, will always take him by that hand with a peculiar feeling of respect and esteem.

Here Jane's voice faltered, and her friend looked at her a little inquisitively. She did not know about Jane's romance, but she knew that Jane was not indifferent to the young Episcopalian clergyman.

After a moment, Jane went on again, and finished the letter with a calm voice.

I send you two copies of *The Pyramid Miner*, containing an account of Will's accident, and Mr. Randall's work here, together with a sketch of his heroism. It is written in a somewhat wild Western style, full of adjectives and mining camp expressions, your father says, but I am sure the article does not at all exaggerate the modest heroism of the act which saved your brother's life.

Your father will start for home to-morrow, as the affairs of the church just now are so critical as to call for his personal attention. I shall stay and nurse Will as long as it is necessary. Mr. and Mrs. Clark, of the Congregational Church, have been very kind to us, as well as many of their people. Perhaps Will will return with me. He is not able yet to talk of the future.—Much love to you from MOTHER.

Jane put the letter back into the envelope, and picked up a copy of the Pyramid paper.

CHAPTER X.

THE MESSAGE OF "THE PYRAMID MINER."

THE article on Randall was over a column long. Jane read it with a feeling of satisfaction that she could not conceal from her friend. The article containing the account of William's accident was dated the day after, and contained the following sentences. After giving an extended account of the terrible nature of the accident and its serious results, the article went on :—

"Mr. Procter was formerly a theological student in one of the Eastern seminaries. He gave up the study for the ministry on account of theological opinions. There was also a romance of some sort connected with his experience that drove him out of the ranks of a profession into the business of mill superintendent. The father of Mr. Procter, Rev. John Procter, of Markham, Ohio, has been telegraphed for, and will probably be here this week. The accident is of a serious nature, and may result fatally. At present the patient is still unconscious."

That night, when she went to her room, Jane read her mother's letter and the newspaper article again. Her cheeks flushed and her eyes grew dim as she

pictured the scene of the mill. She felt proud that the man who loved her was a hero.

"I never thought that a minister could be a hero," said Jane thoughtfully. "I could almost——"

She did not say what she "could almost," but if Francis Randall could have pleaded his suit at that moment, it might have been possible that Jane would have put her hand into his scarred one and given him her heart with a tearful pride in him.

Then she began to think of her brother and the article in the paper relating to the accident and speaking of his Andover experience. How any newspaper man ever found out anything about William Procter's private romance back there was a startling mystery to Jane, but somehow it had become known, and Jane was suddenly impelled to do a thing with the newspaper which she might well have hesitated to do if she could have foreseen all the immediate consequences of it.

She had secured from her brother, before he went out to Pyramid, the name of the Andover young woman whose picture had so agitated William while he was packing his trunk. Jane, in a moment of almost anger at this young woman, who had helped to spoil her brother's life, decided to send her the copy of the paper containing the vivid account of William's accident.

She was not as sincere and honest as Jane Procter usually was in the habit of being, for she sent no word of William's recovery. But there was a feeling within her which said in quite a hard spirit—

"Let her suffer a little, if she cares any for him. I'm sure she has hurt him deeply enough."

So there went out of the Markham post-office the next morning a copy of *The Pyramid Miner*, addressed to "Miss Rebecca Phillips, Andover, Mass.," with a certain article marked at the bottom with Jane's initials.

The evening of the day after Jane had sent this Pyramid paper, Professor Elias Phillips, of Andover Theological Seminary, was sitting in his study working over some manuscript notes on his new book, which was an exhaustive analysis of the characteristics of the minor prophets. The evening mail had just been brought to the house by one of the Academy boys, and Miss Rebecca had just come into the study and laid some letters down on the Professor's desk.

"Is that all?" asked the Professor a little absently, as he glanced over the letters without opening any of them.

"Yes, except a paper for me," answered his daughter.

She took the paper, and went with it into the sitting-room. The study door was left a little ajar.

The Professor was so much interested in his notes on the minor prophets that he let his letters lie unopened on his desk. A few minutes went by silently. Everything in the old mansion seemed very peaceful. The servants had finished their work and had gone to their rooms. It was so quiet that the Professor's pen (as usual, not a very good one) scratched noisily over his paper. He was making good progress with the work. If he could have an uninterrupted hour

or two every day during the coming winter, he might hope to complete the book inside of three or four years. The Professor of Old Testament Literature was very methodical, and not a man to be hurried into print without having made very thorough preparation.

Suddenly the scholastic quiet of the Professor's surroundings was broken by a loud cry in the other room. He started, and sat up straight in his chair. The next moment the study door opened hastily, and his daughter came in.

She was very pale, and unusually excited. It was not a weakness of the Phillips' family to become excited over anything.

"Father, read that!" exclaimed Rebecca, holding out *The Pyramid Miner*, and pointing at the article which Jane had marked so heavily that it looked as if bounded by mourning.

The Professor took up the paper, but he did not look at the article.

"What is the matter, my dear? You are very much agitated."

"Will you read the paper?" asked Miss Rebecca, almost angrily. It was true that she was very much moved.

The Professor turned to the article and read it, without a word or look to betray any emotion.

"Well?" he said, looking up toward Rebecca.

"Don't you understand, father?" Rebecca came closer to him and laid a hand on his shoulder. Then she suddenly kneeled down by his chair and laid her proud head on her father's arm.

It is William who is hurt; perhaps he is dead."

The Professor understood now. The minor prophets were of minor importance to him for the moment by the side of his daughter's experience.

"Oh! William Procter! Ah! I see! Yes! I did not realise what it might mean to you. Rebecca,"—he put his hand on her head, and remembered, as he did so, that this proud young woman, the only daughter, had lost a mother's counsel when she was a little girl,—"Rebecca, is it true? do you — tell me frankly, my dear—do you still care for William Procter?" he asked gently.

"Yes." The answer came in a very low voice, but there was no mistaking its meaning.

"And yet you decided that—that—you could not share your life——"

"Father," said Rebecca passionately, rising and putting both hands on his shoulders, "I did not know how much — but you must telegraph to Pyramid and find out——"

"But this paper is dated nearly three weeks back," said the Professor. "If he were fatally injured, surely we would know it by this time."

"Let me see!" cried Rebecca, and when she saw the date her heart leaped up with hope.

"Still, father, we do not know for certain. Won't you go down and send a message?"

"Yes, of course I will." The Professor arose, looking a little sorrowfully at his notes on the desk.

"Of course it would be better for you to send it?" said Miss Rebecca, looking a little hesitatingly at

the Professor as he went out into the hall and took down his hat.

The Professor did not reply, but he put on his hat and opened the door. Something in his daughter's face, as she stood looking at him, moved him to shut the door again and come back to her.

"Rebecca," he said, as he bent his grey head and kissed her (and it was a long time since he had done so), "your father is not considered an authority in anything except the Old Testament writers, but if you love William Procter——"

He looked into his daughter's face and did not need to complete his sentence. She answered his look with one he thought he understood, and after his unusual caress he went out.

When he was gone, Rebecca Phillips sat down in her father's chair, and the truth must be told, that several tears from eyes that nearly all Andover people called proud, fell upon the manuscript relating to the minor prophets.

Professor Phillips went as fast as he could walk to the telegraph station and sent off two telegrams.

The first was to the "Rev. John Procter, Markham."

Jane opened this telegram when it came with some misgiving at heart.

She felt some twinges of conscience as she read it—

Send word if William Procter is recovering. Haste. My expense. ELIAS PHILLIPS.

ANDOVER, MASS.

At first Jane had a moment of irresolution, almost

as if she did not mean to answer the Professor's telegram. But she stepped into the telegraph office on her way to school the next morning, and sent the following, directing it not to Professor Phillips, but to Rebecca :—

William out of danger. Very ill. Mother is with him.

Jane Procter did not know Miss Rebecca Phillips at all, but she had a hope that the last four words might cause her some remorse or heartache, or something that would result in William's favour. It was not until long after that she knew anything of the result of that telegram.

The other message, sent by the Professor, was to Pyramid.

He hesitated for a little before directing the address, but finally sent it to "Rev. Francis Randall, Pyramid, Colorado."

"Randall must know about it, of course. And he is sure to answer."

The Dean and the Professor were old friends. Indeed, it was through the Professor that Francis had first heard of William at Pyramid.

An answer to this telegram came promptly :—

PROF. ELIAS PHILLIPS,
ANDOVER, MASS.

William out of danger. May lose sight of one eye.
FRANCIS RANDALL.

The Professor said nothing when he handed this to Rebecca. But it is a part of the record of the Lincoln School, where Miss Rebecca taught, that on that particular morning the school teacher in the

Fourth B room seemed very much interested in something that had nothing to do with the lessons; that she had red eyes, as if she had been crying, and that she seemed very glad when school was finally dismissed.

Out at Pyramid the coming of that inquiry from Andover had a peculiar effect on the invalid, lying weak and dependent in the little bedroom of the stuffy boarding-house near the mill.

Randall brought the telegram, and without a word handed it to William.

ANDOVER, MASS.

Is William Procter seriously injured? Telegraph at once. My charges. ELIAS PHILLIPS.

Randall knew nothing whatever of William's romance. As the invalid raised his eyes from the telegram, the clergyman said innocently—

"Very kind of your old Seminary Professor to telegraph. It's a little strange he is so late about it. Two weeks now since you were hurt."

"Is it?" asked William. He re-read the message, and his imagination began to fill in the cold spaces between the words of the telegram. Would the Professor have taken even this late interest in him? If so, was it not possible——

He was too weak to carry on his thought, and when the doctor called, he found his patient had a high fever.

"What have you been doing to him?" he growled testily at Francis Randall, who had just risen to go as the doctor came in.

"Nothing. He had a telegram this morning. Or, rather, I had one inquiring about him."

"Let me see it," said the doctor abruptly.

"Umph! Telegraph back that he will get well if folks will leave him alone," said the doctor, who was in ill-humour that morning.

But William rallied in the afternoon, and steadily grew stronger. The more he thought of the telegram the more hopeful he became that Rebecca still did care for him. When his father had gone back to Markham and his mother was alone with him, he confided his secret to her, and she comforted him as only a mother can.

When the Rev. John Procter reached Markham, after an absence of two weeks, he entered at once upon an unusual experience. Even during the anxious moments he had spent by his son's bedside, the thoughts of his church in Markham had been with him. That it was at a great crisis in its history he knew very well. How the matter would finally be settled he was unable to declare with any certainty. Would a majority of his members vote to unite with the Presbyterians or some other body? If they did, would the minority proceed to form another church, and so make matters as bad as they were before? How would the other churches take such a union? Would it make them more jealous than ever, because such a union would make the largest, strongest church in Markham?

He was not able to answer these questions. Nevertheless, he was fully committed in his own mind to the principle of union, as he had outlined it to his people.

He reached home on Saturday, and learned that a meeting of the church had been called for the following Monday, in anticipation of his return.

When Sunday came, for the first time in nearly fifteen years he found that he was not engaged anywhere to preach. His absence in Pyramid had been of such a character that the other ministers in Markham could not very well make future appointments with him, although several of them had expressed the hearty wish that he preach in their churches until his own was rebuilt. He had returned hurriedly, and very many of the people, even in his own parish, did not know that he was back.

John Procter hesitated a little when the hour for service came that morning, and finally decided to go and hear Harris, the Baptist minister. He had often heard him spoken of as narrow and exceedingly bigoted in certain ways, and he thought he would go and hear for himself.

"Brother Harris happily disappointed me once; perhaps he will again," said John Procter, as Jane and he went along together.

As they went into the church, they noticed and spoke to several of their own church people and friends. When they were seated, they could not help noticing a very large number of the Congregational people scattered through the house.

"Why, father," whispered Jane, after a moment, as people were still coming in, "it is Communion Sunday here! See the table!"

They were seated only three or four pews from the front on the side aisle. John Procter had noticed the

communion table when he sat down. Jane's whisper simply emphasised a curiously exciting emotion he now began to feel at the sight of the familiar emblems on the table.

"Will Brother Harris ask us to partake of the Lord's Supper?"

The question came into John Procter's mind with all the force of a most serious and important event. The Baptist minister had always been very close communion. Could he make a possible exception?

The pulpit was still empty. The Rev. Charles Harris had not yet come out of the room back of the platform. The church was nearly full, and the organist was still playing the prelude. John Procter, with a feeling of growing expectancy, sat there with his eyes on the door which led from the pastor's study to his pulpit.

CHAPTER XI.

"ACCORDING TO THE MASTER'S COMMANDS."

THE Rev. Charles Harris at last opened the door back of the pulpit platform and came out. As he took his seat it is uncertain if he was conscious at first of John Procter's presence. After a moment, however, he lifted his head and looked over the congregation. As his eye rested on that part of the church where John Procter and Jane were seated, he made a movement as if he intended to go down and speak to him. He had half risen from his seat, but seemed to change his mind, for he sat down again, and when he finally did rise it was to open the regular service of the church.

It was the custom in the First Baptist Church of Markham to have a regular preaching service before the communion. The pastor then came down from the pulpit and stood behind the table. If there were any baptisms, they took place immediately after the sermon. The pastor then stepped back into his room to change from his baptismal dress, and came out into the church room through the side door, which opened at the end of one of the side aisles.

There were several baptisms on this special day in the religious history of Markham, a day that no one

present there ever forgot. Charles Harris went on with the service up to the point of the sermon, with a noticeable embarrassment of manner. The sermon itself was not remarkable in any way. John Procter, himself something of a scholar, and, as he was willing to confess, somewhat inclined to be proud of that fact, caught himself several times on the point of criticising sentences and expressions that would not bear the test of rhetorical rules. As often as he found himself doing this, he rebuked the spirit that prompted it. The sermon was not without excellent thought. There was a sincerity about it that went far toward redeeming it from indifference, and John Procter compelled himself to say so.

During the baptisms which followed, both John Procter and Jane were impressed by the service. They had never, either of them, been present at such a service, and they were struck with the simplicity and earnestness of the minister and those who presented themselves for membership.

As soon as the baptisms were over, the choir began the singing of an anthem appropriate to the service. John Procter knew enough of the customs of the Baptist Church, from what he had heard others say, to know that the minister would enter the room from the side aisle door. He kept his eyes on this door with a strange excitement of feeling. Upon what might possibly happen in the next few minutes would depend the shaping of church history in Markham along some very vital lines of life. John Procter did not have time to analyse all that he hoped or feared from what might be. He only knew that somehow

he could not help attaching very great importance to the appearance of the Baptist minister when he should come out of his room and go up to the communion table.

There was an unusually long time before the minister appeared. The choir had finished its anthem and sat down. The organist continued playing, but it was evident to John Procter, from the actions of people around him, that the prolonged absence of the minister was very unusual.

At last, when the waiting of the congregation had grown to be painfully embarrassing, the door that every one was now looking at opened, and the Rev. Charles Harris appeared.

He came into the church very slowly, and deliberately shut the door as he faced the people. For an instant he stood still. Then he walked directly down the aisle to where John Procter was sitting, and bent over and whispered something to him.

The church was very quiet, and every one was looking intently at the two ministers. John Procter was seen to change colour, as if he had been unexpectedly moved. The next moment he rose from his seat and followed Charles Harris up to the communion table. He sat down in the seat to which Harris motioned him, while the pastor remained standing, facing his people.

The First Baptist Church of Markham had never known such an exciting moment in all its church history. There was no law or rule in the church forbidding other denominations from partaking of the Lord's Supper. It had simply been a custom

dating back to the organisation of the church. And never yet had that custom been changed or varied.

The Rev. Charles Harris spoke slowly, but distinctly—

"I have taken the liberty to-day of inviting to the Lord's table, to assist me, Rev. John Procter. We shall be glad to have our friends of the Congregational Church who are present with us to-day, partake of the emblems with us, according to the Master's command."

He looked about for a moment, and then gave out the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

It is doubtful if that hymn had ever been sung before with more emotion in that church. It certainly had never been sung before with reference to any other denomination. After it was finished, the minister offered a prayer and served the bread. He asked John Procter to follow him in the service of the cup. All through the congregation there was a deepening feeling of interest. It reached its climax when, at the close of the communion, the minister spoke a few words, in which he referred to the sermon preached by John Procter the first Sunday after his own church was burned down. All the while he was speaking, the people showed by many tokens that they were deeply moved.

When the service closed, nearly every one in the church crowded up to the front to shake John Procter's hand. A breaking down of all sectarian lines seemed to John Procter to be possible. He was almost bewildered as he stood there thinking

about the morning's experience. He was unable to account for the absence of opposition in the Baptist congregation to what had undoubtedly been a most decided innovation. A few of the older men and women walked out of the church without greeting the pastor. There was, on the part of a few, a very strong objection to what Charles Harris had done. But the majority of the members seemed to approve of his action. It was almost as if a movement had been begun for which their hearts and minds had long been prepared.

"Will you come into the study a moment, Mr. Procter?" asked Harris, when finally the people had all gone. Jane was waiting, but she went out when her father said he might remain a little while longer, and the two ministers went into the little room back of the pulpit.

"I feel as if some explanation were due you for my action to-day," began Charles Harris, with the same noticeable embarrassment he had shown in the pulpit. This soon passed away, as he went on with his explanation.

"Brother Procter, when I stepped in here after the baptism, I had not made up my mind about inviting you and your people to the Lord's Supper. I had thought of it the moment I saw you, but I was not sure that I ought to break over an old and established custom of our church. When the baptisms were finally over and I had come in here, I had an unusual experience. Since the burning of your church and your preaching in my pulpit I have felt as if some great influence were at work in Markham. Is it the

Divine Spirit manifesting Himself in unusual power for some reason we cannot tell? What else could have prevailed upon Dean Randall to do such an astonishing thing as to invite you into the pulpit of Grace Cathedral?

"I have asked these questions many times lately. But when I came into my room here I was met by an actual Presence that I could not deny. That is the reason my stay here was so long. I have never had a similar experience. If Christ is still alive, as we say we believe, He manifested Himself to me here in a way I cannot wholly explain. I saw no form, I heard no voice. But I was conscious of an appeal being made to me by some person who instantly became real to my thought as the Lord.

"It is hardly necessary for me to say, Brother Procter, that I have always been a very zealous Baptist. The last thing in the world that I once expected to do is what I have done to-day. I have always believed that close communion was an essential custom of our church. I have preached against open communion when it was practised by the ministers of our denomination in England or in this country. But this morning I was irresistibly influenced to invite you and your people to the Lord's Supper. The Presence that seemed to be waiting for me here when I came in from the baptisms seemed to insist that I do as I did. I rebelled at first. But I could not leave the room. I knew the people were waiting for me to come out; but when I finally did yield, it seemed as if there was a sudden breaking into the room of a great light. We do not live in an

age of miracles, Brother Procter; but I cannot deny the experience I had here an hour ago."

"It was the Holy Spirit," said John Procter. He spoke after a long silence. He had never felt so solemn, so profoundly moved. Was the miracle at Markham, that he had judged necessary for the union of the churches, about to be wrought? If God was in His world yet, and Christ loved the church yet, as He did two thousand years ago, why not? Was the age without a miracle? Was the Holy Spirit unable to move a man or a city in this way?

Charles Harris was not a remarkable man in any way. He was a narrow, uneducated man in many ways. But he was sincere, and wholly devoted to the church, or at least to the definition he had made of the church. The experience he had had that day was far beyond anything in his religious life. But the Lord does not always stop to choose out any particular man as we think He ought to when certain movements in the religious history of a community are needed. That He had chosen to move through this man was a matter of more moment to John Procter just then than anything else. It was not the man, so much as the message that he had received, that moved and agitated John Procter.

It was perfectly natural that in the next few minutes that followed the relation of Charles Harris's experience, the two ministers found themselves on their knees praying together. What was true in the case of the Dean and John Procter after the service at the cathedral found a repetition in the little room back of the pulpit in the Baptist Church. And John

Procter knew when he finally went out of that room that so far as Charles Harris, and, probably, also his church were concerned, another step had been taken towards a true church in Markham.

With this profound impression of the divine impulse that was gaining power, John Procter went to the meeting of his church the next evening. It was the congregational meeting, which was to decide the future of the Congregational Church in Markham. With the seriousness which was inevitable from such a fact, the people crowded the Presbyterian Church, which had been offered to them for use on this occasion, and with a deepening seriousness they discussed for three hours every phase of the proposed union with some other church in Markham.

The discussion had been carried on without formal motion. The most prominent members had expressed themselves freely. Finally, one of the deacons, a man of very sweet and strong spirit, a man whose Christian character commanded the respect of every member of the church, rose and offered a formal motion.

"I move," he said, with grave deliberation, while John Procter looked at him, and then at the congregation, with increasing emotion,—"I move that our church take steps to unite with some other Christian church here in Markham, and that the details of such union be left to a committee, of which our pastor shall be the chairman."

The motion was seconded at once by one of the trustees. The congregation had virtually been discussing such a motion all the evening. They were

ready now to act upon it. John Procter, however, could not tell even yet, after all the evening's conference, how the vote would go. The entire movement beneath the surface of religious feeling in Markham was yet largely unknown to him.

The vote was taken by ballot. As the ballots were brought up to the table and the question was asked if every one had voted, there was a solemn hush over the church. Even while the ballots were being counted there was none of the usual whispering and confusion common at such a time.

"The clerk is ready to announce the result of the ballot," said John Procter, as he rose and stood by the table, where the counting had been going on.

"Total number of votes cast is one hundred and thirty-two: of which seven are against the motion, and the balance, one hundred and twenty-five, are in favour of it."

The clerk's voice was generally a little indistinct. There were people in the First Congregational Church of Markham who had more than once criticised his enunciation. But every syllable he uttered now, in the announcement of the result of the vote, fell very distinctly on the ears of the congregation. It would have been a dull people who would not be moved by such an announcement. The silence that greeted it was significant of the spirit of the church. There was no applause, no shallow enthusiasm. The Congregational Church of Markham had taken the most important step in all its history, and it realised the seriousness of it.

John Procter said a few words.

"I wish the vote had been entirely unanimous. I am very glad, however, that it is practically so. I am sure that time will prove the Christian wisdom of our course. Let us have a few prayers, asking the Spirit to lead us into all the truth."

That famous meeting of the Congregational Church in Markham closed with a tender appeal that left the glow of a spiritual reality in the hearts of the people. Before they went home, John Procter asked them to appoint the committee to serve with him. The committee was accordingly appointed, and a date assigned for it to meet and afterward report to the church.

CHAPTER XII.

A BROKEN HEART.

WHEN the news of the action taken at the meeting came out next morning, all Markham was deeply moved by it. The daily paper, which had for years run sensational items as a part of its local column, made the most of such a rare opportunity. A part of its account of the meeting is here quoted to show how it regarded the movement:—

"Since the burning of the Congregational Church it has been a question with the trustees whether they could possibly rebuild. There was great diversity of opinion on this point. There is no doubt that Rev. John Procter's opinion influenced very many of his members whose judgment is for continuing their own organisation. It is also said that these members regret their vote to unite with some other church in Markham, and that they will probably go off with the minority who voted against the motion, and organise a Congregational Church. It is difficult to see what the Rev. John Procter has to gain by such a move. We understand there is great discontent and dissatisfaction in his congregation."

This is only a small part of the report in the paper. It was so misleading that John Procter was strongly

tempted to reply to it. He did not do so, however, but he did a good deal of thinking along the line of the need of a Christian daily newspaper in Markham. More than once he said, "If we Christian people in Markham were once really united, we could have such a paper as we ought to have." He put this thought, as a dream to be realised, into his mind, and went forward to complete the work which now rested upon the committee of which he was chairman.

They met at once, and after careful canvass of all the conditions, decided to go to the pastor of the Presbyterian Church and ask him to call his session together for mutual conference. There was no other church in Markham that contained at that particular time so great a number of personal friends and acquaintances of the Congregational Church members. The two churches were practically the same in doctrine. They were the same in their expressions of essential faith. Their church membership was small, and the union of the Congregationalists with them would make a church of about three hundred members in all.

Rev. Hugh Cameron and his session accordingly met John Procter and his committee and canvassed the whole situation carefully.

It is without doubt that the Presbyterians entertained with the greatest astonishment the proposition that John Procter, in the name of the committee, finally laid before them. That proposition was, in brief, that the entire membership of the Congregational Church come into the Presbyterian, bringing with them their pledge of financial support. That the

money coming to them on the insurance of their burned building be turned into the common church treasury to be used for the purpose of helping the needed benevolent or philanthropic work of Markham. That the two ministers be retained by the church, and their services employed alternately in the pulpit and the general work of the town, wherever it would, in time, seem best to labour. That the business management of the church be under the direction of a board of managers, to consist of the present session of the Presbyterian Church and the trustees of the Congregational. That the present officers of both churches—deacons, superintendents, and teachers of Sunday schools—be retained, and assist one another in every way possible. That the salaries of the ministers be determined by the board of managers, their decision being ratified by the whole congregation. That the two churches finally come together, when they so agreed, in a communion service which should be preceded by a series of prayer-meetings the week before.

This series of propositions, modified and enlarged somewhat, was finally agreed upon. The Rev. Hugh Cameron and his session knelt in prayer with John Procter and his committee. They all confessed afterwards that they had never felt more of the Spirit's presence than during that prayer-meeting. The old formal, unchristian walls of prejudice melted away and fell down between them. Before they separated, they clasped hands as brethren. John Procter, on reaching home, went into his study and, bowing his head on his desk, gave thanks to God

the Father for what he believed was the beginning of a new and unparalleled church life in Markham.

The decision reached by the conference of the two ministers and their committees was in a short time brought before the two congregations, first separately, afterwards in a union meeting. There were some minor changes made in the propositions on which the two churches were to unite, but the final agreement was practically on the lines first laid down. The date for the communion service was decided upon, and the prayer week begun with an interest which had not been known in Markham since a famous revivalist had held meetings in the town many years before.

When the morning of the communion dawned on Markham, it found the members of the two churches ready to come together as Christian disciples. The prayer-meetings during the week had been largely attended. Two of the seven members in John Procter's church who had voted against union, came to him and asked to have their vote changed to the affirmative. The warmest spiritual interest existed throughout both churches. It was true, as John Procter had predicted, that one of the first results of their union with another church would be a good outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But even he was not prepared for the manifestation that followed the communion service.

The two ministers sat at the table. The church was crowded. Chairs had been brought into the aisles, and the gallery was filled long before the hour of service.

A form of a mutual covenant had been agreed upon, and all the members of both churches rose while it was being read. At its close, Hugh Cameron grasped John Procter's hand and spoke a few words of greeting. John Procter replied briefly. The most eloquent part of the impressive service was the communion itself, when the officers of both churches carried the bread and the cup to the members. The hushed congregation, the sight of the two ministers sitting side by side, the impression made by the growing thought of what the day meant, made an occasion of rare and powerful moment.

Throughout the day this feeling grew. At the evening service the building was again crowded as never before. Hugh Cameron and John Procter both spoke. A dozen men in the congregation came up after the service, and said they wanted to be Christians. There was another service which lasted until ten o'clock, and when John Procter and Hugh Cameron finally went home, they carried with them the joy of knowing that they were at the beginning of a genuine Christian revival such as neither church had known since its organisation.

During the weeks that followed, Markham was moved by the Spirit of God. All the history of that time has never been written. Some of it determined events that have to do with our characters, and made possible what otherwise would have been beyond the reach of any human power.

To all of this, the remarkable union of these two churches and the results that followed, the Very

Reverend Dean Randall, of Grace Cathedral, was a profoundly moved spectator. He was more than a spectator. He offered to preach several times during the meetings that were held night after night, and many a soul in Markham recalls with tears of joy the fact that he owes his conversion to the wise and tender appeal of the Dean.

But events for the Dean were moving on to a crisis. The action he had taken in asking John Procter into his pulpit had not been passed by unnoticed. One of his wardens had made formal complaint to the Bishop. The Bishop had, in turn, after another ineffectual remonstrance with the Dean, reluctantly cited him to appear for trial before the church tribunal authorised for the purpose. This ecclesiastical court was to sit on the coming Tuesday. This was six weeks after the union of the two churches, and while the religious meetings were at the climax of their power.

The Dean had grown visibly older and sadder since these events became a part of his personal history. The inner fire of his spiritual revolution burned fiercely, and no man in Markham knew of his struggles. The Christ in Gethsemane sometimes seemed very far off to the Dean as he sat in his study. Again, that agonising Figure drew near to him and gave him comfort.

On Saturday one of the Dean's parishioners, a man who loved and trusted him, came to see him about the trial.

"There is one point we have overlooked," he said, as he sat in the Dean's study and noted with

sorrow the Dean's worn and even deathly expression. "The cathedral has never been consecrated. You remember we are waiting to complete the guild hall and a part of the east nave. No church rule can possibly forbid you from inviting a clergyman of another denomination into an unconsecrated church edifice. In making your defence before the tribunal next Tuesday, you can take the ground that the cathedral has never been consecrated formally, and therefore you had a perfect right to invite Brother Procter into Grace Cathedral."

The Dean was visibly startled. He had forgotten the fact to which his parishioner called his attention.

"It is true," he replied. Then he was silent. It was a purely technical way of escaping from a difficulty. No church tribunal could hold him guilty on account of that technical fact. But had he no other or higher motive for what he had done?

The parishioner went out of the Dean's study puzzled to know what the Dean would do. He gave the impression that he did not intend to make use of the technical unconsecration of the cathedral when he appeared before the court.

Sunday, the people of Grace Cathedral all noted with an almost shocked surprise the manner of Dean Randall in the pulpit. He looked like a man who had received some great blow that had disturbed his whole nature. The anticipation of the trial fixed for that week, was given as the reason for his agitation. And still, not even his closest

friends understood the mental agony the Dean was enduring.

He sat in his study Tuesday morning. The trial had been fixed for ten o'clock. The clergymen and bishops summoned had all arrived, and the occasion was one of deep interest to all Markham.

The Dean had asked his wife to leave him for a few moments by himself. He wanted to write out something. She had been very anxious about him that morning. He wanted a little while to be alone. He would be ready to go over to the cathedral in time, he said.

She went out reluctantly. As she looked back, the view she had of her husband was reassuring. He was sitting quietly at his desk writing. She shut the door and went into the sitting-room to wait for him.

The minutes went by, and still there was no movement on the part of the Dean to come out. It was five minutes after ten. Mrs. Randall was very nervous. She stole out into the hall and listened at the study door. No sound. The bell rang at that instant. The noise startled her.

A messenger at the door had been sent over from the cathedral to ask if the Dean was ill. The report had been circulated that he might not be able to appear for trial. The court was seated and ready for him.

Mrs. Randall hesitated no longer. She opened the Dean's study door softly, and took a step into the room.

The Dean was still at his desk. What he had

written lay neatly on the top of a Prayer-Book. He had not taken his own life, but his face was lying on the picture of Christ at Gethsemane, which he had taken down from its usual position over his desk, and his spirit had departed to God who gave it, beyond the jurisdiction of all ecclesiastical courts of earthly power.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEAN'S CONFESSION.

THE third day after he was found dead in his study at the manse, the body of Dean Randall was buried in the cemetery out on the wooded hills by the river. The funeral service in the cathedral had been very impressive. Many of the clergymen who had been summoned to the trial of the Dean were present at his funeral. Bishop Park with an unusually sad face, in the chancel, read the service with a voice which more than once broke with sympathy. For he loved Dean Randall, without altogether understanding him. Besides, as his eye rested on the front seat near the chancel rail, he felt during all the service the presence of Francis Randall, who had come from Pyramid. His mother leaned upon him, her white face turning often to him for comfort.

Out at the grave she clasped her son's arm with both her hands, while the words were recited solemnly, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust"; and as the rest drew back and left them nearer the grave, mother and son dropped tears of their common humanity on the coffin as it rested in its place. Then, going home, after the last friend

had departed from the manse, they went over again the written statement of the Dean, which he had composed the day of his death. They had already considered it several times. Francis now held the sheets of paper in his hand, and thoughtfully reviewed again his father's confession. For that is what it really was.

"To my Dear Wife and my Son Francis," the paper began, and then went on as follows:—

"The statement which is found at the close of what I write here this morning was written several years ago. At the present time, this Tuesday morning, when I am awaiting the trial at the cathedral, I do not see anything in the statement to modify or withdraw. I wish my wife and son to read what I have here written, and make public only such parts of it as they may find it wise to do. I have opened my whole heart to you. Some of my disclosure is too sacred for others. May the Lord of all grace and mercy keep and bless you! If I am summoned by the God of all life into His presence this day, I go prepared to meet His all-knowing and all-compassionate love. This is written in the faith that anticipates a joyful meeting——"

It was at this point that the Dean had evidently dropped his pen upon the paper. He had then evidently risen, reached down the picture, placed the leaves of his statement together, and then fallen with his face resting on the desk, as his wife had found him when she entered the study.

The statement that followed what the Dean had written that Tuesday morning was this:—

"I write this which follows in order that those who are nearest to me by the ties of kindred and affection may understand what may seem to many of them contrary to my nature, as they think they have known me for many years.

"When the Rev. John Procter's church was burned down and I invited him into the pulpit of Grace Cathedral, probably not one man among all my acquaintainces in Markham understood my motive. It was not a sudden resolve on my part, but was in reality the result of the conviction of several years' experience and meditation, deepened and strengthened by the experience of my own son in his Western parish.

"But since my invitation of Brother Procter and his acceptance, which has led up to this ecclesiastical trial which awaits me, I have had a strange and, to me, inexpressibly painful revolution of feeling and also of judgment over this matter.

"Day by day the conviction has grown with me that I have made a mistake in this matter. It is difficult for me to explain what I mean by this. I believe as firmly as ever in the great need of Christian union. I feel as if it was all wrong that our church, into which I have grown by long years of association, should refuse by its canon law to admit clergymen of other denominations into its pulpit to preach or administer the sacraments. But my judgment begins to torture me by asserting that I have not chosen the best or wisest way to bring about a change in this church rule of conduct. I begin to think that I should either have withdrawn

from the Episcopal Church altogether and united with some other, where my convictions on this question would not be outraged; or, failing to do this, I ought to have confessed to the Bishop my fault, and so let the matter fall, without the inevitable trial.

"I have done neither of these things. My whole outward church life has made such a course as either one of these impossible for me. I have therefore been tormented by the conviction that my attempt to bring about a spirit of Christian union has failed within my own church, while at the same time I have not acknowledged my mistake, nor withdrawn myself from the dilemma which has grown more perplexing to me with every day's approach to the trial.

"As I write this, I do not see at all clearly what the future is for the Episcopal Church, so far as any attempt towards real church union is concerned. If the time should come when the old canon law, forbidding other ministers to preach in our churches, should be withdrawn or modified, it would, without doubt, have a mighty influence upon the churches to bring them together. As I write this, with the conviction growing firmer than ever that I myself have not taken the right course to bring about this result, I am without any hesitation whatever in saying that this canon is contrary to the spirit of Christ and ought not to be a part of the Episcopal Church life. When, however, I try to answer the question, How shall the church unite more fully with the other churches and Christians? I have no answer. My own struggles and my own personal

convictions of mistake in what I have done leave me in no condition to decide a possible course for my church to pursue, even supposing it wishes to unite fully with Christendom.

"I have also a confession to make regarding my own personal failure to identify myself with any movement towards the public welfare of Markham. I have, and I say it with deep and painful regret, cut myself selfishly away from all other men and measures in matters of public good. My natural tastes and habits have been those of the recluse and the scholar. As I draw near what I have a presentiment is the end, I regret with a bitterness which only deeply sensitive natures feel, my unchristianlike isolation from the common sins and needs of the town where I have lived so long.

"I do not yet know what my action will be at the trial. I await it with a dread which is heightened by my confusion of mind at the thought of a blunder of judgment, which had at the heart of it a most truthful desire to do the Christlike thing.

"There is one other matter which concerns my family. For the last two years I have looked death in the face daily. A lesion of the heart valves has made possible my sudden death at any time. My physician knows this,—no one else. I have considered all sides of the possibility so far as my own wife and son are concerned. There would be no difference in my condition or in the chances for my recovery if I were to cease work. I am in no pain, and my end, when it comes, will probably be swift and without suffering.

"I think my wife and son will understand what I have tried to explain. I love the church into which I was born, and to which I have given my service, weak and imperfect as it may be. But I am torn by an inward conflict, as I behold her divided from her brethren, and I realise my own powerlessness to change or better her rules of conduct. If, when I am gone, even the result of my imperfect and unsatisfactory desire shall be a longing to unite with other Christians, that shall in time do away with the old customs, I shall count all the experience of the past year in my life as worth while.

"Meanwhile I walk in the darkness. Yet have I not often sung, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation'?"——

Here the confession ended with an abruptness that seemed to indicate an interruption which was of such a nature as to demand instant attention, and evidently at no future time had the Dean wished to add to what he had written.

For a long time Francis Randall and his mother dwelt upon this remarkable revelation of the Dean's inner experience.

"Do you think, do you believe, Francis, that your father was really mistaken—I mean, did he make a real mistake when he invited Mr. Procter into the cathedral?"

Mrs. Randall asked this question of her son with painful interest in his reply.

"Mother," said Francis slowly, "I do not yet believe that father made any mistake. But it is the sad thing for us to know now that he believed he

did. What he says about the best way to bring about a union between our church and others is vital. I have struggled over that question more than over any other. I do not yet see the light."

During Francis Randall's stay in Markham, attending to the business of his father's estate, mother and son often recurred to the Dean's confession. What his father had written affected Francis Randall deeply. It had the effect of modifying his views on some points. But concerning his own view of the best way to effect a union between his own church and others, he was more and more perplexed. That his father had agonised over it until it had been one of the immediate causes of his death, or at least the mental stress that had hastened it, Francis was fully convinced. In a growing seriousness and a more passionate longing for the most Christian wisdom to settle his own religious convictions right, he prepared to return to his own work in Pyramid.

But before he went back to that life of stress and struggle with the wild life that wounded his manly soul like a crucifixion, he went to see Jane Procter and plead with her again to go with him.

He had not seen Jane to talk with her since his sad return, on account of the death of the Dean. Once he had stepped into the house for a formal call of a few moments and had seen Mr. and Mrs. Procter, but Jane was not yet home from her school. He wondered a little if she had purposely avoided him.

So he called the next time after school hours, late in the afternoon. This was two weeks after his father's death.

When he rang the bell, Jane herself opened the door. She had on her hat and cloak, and seemed confused at the sight of Randall.

"Excuse me," said Francis gravely, "perhaps you were going out. Don't let me keep you if you were."

"No, no," murmured Jane; "I—you—I am very glad to see you. Won't you come in?"

Francis Randall entered, and followed Jane into the parlour. As he took a seat, Jane noticed that his hand, the one that had been burned at the time of William's accident, was really disfigured. As she remembered, Francis Randall had once been proud of his physical perfection. She wondered how he felt now.

"Did you really mean that?" asked Randall, after a second's very painful pause.

"Mean what?" asked Jane, trembling to think he might have actually caught her looking at the disfigurement of his hand.

"Why, are you really glad to see me, Jane? Because you know what I have come for, don't you?"

"I don't know," replied Jane faintly. She said to herself, "If he proposes to me again, I do not know how to refuse him."

"Because you know, Jane, I feel just the same that I always did. You have no idea how I dread to go back to Pyramid alone. A minister cannot do his work well unless he is married. Do I need to tell you again, Jane, that I love you with all the heart?"

Jane did not dare look up. Her heart beat fast. A great conflict was going on in her. She felt that

if once she looked up into Francis Randall's pale, handsome face, she would not be able to say no to him again.

He waited a moment for her to answer his question, and then slowly and deliberately took up his chair and brought it over close to her and sat down. He did not offer to touch her, and something told Jane that he would never attempt even a lover's caress until she had yielded her heart to him. But when he spoke again, she trembled at the thought of the man's great-hearted love for her.

"Jane, I cannot and I will not go back to Pyramid until I know whether you love me. You must tell me. Do you love, Jane, or not?"

"I have told you I cannot marry a minister. I am not fitted for such a position." Jane's lips trembled and her voice was very low.

"That is not my question," said Francis Randall firmly, and still Jane did not dare to look up at him.

But something in his tone roused a feeling of resistance in Jane's nature. And it was then that she uttered the words that caused her the bitterest regret of her whole life. We have all done the same thing at some time.

"Ministers live such dull, self-sacrificing lives. I am tired of the shifts and expedients of a poor minister's daughter. I could never make you happy."

A great change came into Francis Randall's face. He clenched his hands on the chair, as if to keep himself from falling. The scar on his right hand stood out like a great birthmark. His large soft

eyes grew hard, and the whole man stiffened as if in sudden resistance to a blow.

He rose from his seat and stood directly in front of Jane. She seemed compelled to look up at him.

"So you will not marry me because I am a poor minister? Is that it? It is not because I am in the church, but because I am not rich?"

Jane would not answer, but her tongue seemed powerless. The unexpected disclosure of her secret reason, which she had not even dared to acknowledge to herself, except at very rare moments, smote her heart with fear and shame.

He waited a moment, and then said, "You have given me your answer." Before she could realise what he was doing, he had turned and walked swiftly out of the parlour into the hall. He opened the door and went out.

Then Jane ran into the hall. As she ran, she cried out with a sob, "No, no, Francis! I do love you!" She even had her hand on the door and was about to open it, but a feeling of shame seized her, and she went back into the parlour, and, throwing herself down on the couch, cried as she had not cried since she was a little girl.

CHAPTER XIV.

A UNITED PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

IT is possible that if Francis Randall had heard her he might have come back. But the man's heart was sore buffeted within him, and he went out to Pyramid with a great sadness of soul, and as he took up the burdens of his rough parish, he groaned in spirit, and asked himself if it was worth while to make the struggle. For the love of his life seemed to be killed out of him, and nothing but his Christian faith now kept him true to the routine of duties that must be obeyed, whether his human heart was satisfied or not. It was one comfort to him that his mother went with him to keep house for him temporarily.

As for Jane, she confronted for the first time her real motive for refusing to marry Francis Randall. The hideous fact that she was forced to face was doubly hideous to her, because she had thought to deceive herself for a long time by keeping it in the background. But had she given Francis Randall her final answer? She loved him more than ever. Only that gaunt troublesome thing, the poverty and meagreness of a poor minister's house, seemed to

thrust in between her heart's longing and her lover's persistence.

Was he her lover any longer? Had she not murdered something there in the parlour that afternoon? But other girls killed the same thing. She recalled several of her acquaintances who had married rich men for the money, the position, the social distinction. And they seemed happy. Did they successfully hide the skeleton at home when the public was not looking on? Her heart hungered for the love which she had turned away. And in the days that followed she went to her school with the treadmill pace of one who has seen heaven draw very near, and then vanish, with no hope or desire for the future. Ah, Jane! it is a terrible thing for a woman to try to put anything above the wealth of a good man's love! Will you live to realise, even through bitterness of soul, what you have lost in killing the best and holiest feeling in a woman's life?

Ignorant of this tragedy in the heart-life of two of its children, the town of Markham awoke that winter, as the weeks went on, to the fact of a transformation taking place in its inner circle of conduct.

The town had watched the union of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches with an interest it had never before felt for anything, unless it was a private scandal or a public crime. Dimly, but surely, it was coming to be felt, even by the city local politicians and unchristianlike men of Markham, that a new force was present that somehow was to be reckoned with.

The meetings begun at the time the two churches united, continued for three months, healthfully and steadily. When they closed, a series of cottage prayer-meetings began, which afterwards developed into a force for bringing together nearly all the Christian workers of Markham. But before that time came, Rev. John Procter and Hugh Cameron held a conference, at which certain plans were discussed which belong to the history of the Miracle at Markham.

John Procter and Hugh Cameron were fast learning to love each other. The church people had voted to ask the two ministers to preach alternately on the Sabbath. The question of how the two men could best serve the needs of the town had come up in a service held one Sunday evening. At that meeting Rev. John Procter presented the following line of campaign, and it is not too much to say that it was listened to with unusual interest.

"Brother Cameron and myself have counselled together very often about the best line for church work, and we wish to present this outline for the action of the church. It all comes under the general head:—

"What can the churches of Markham do for the Christianising of the town itself?

"I. THE NEED OF MARKHAM.

"It may be summed up under five heads—

"(1) The need of a united church.

"(2) The need of a Christian Sabbath.

"(3) The need of a combined attack by all Christian forces upon the saloon.

"(4) The need of an evangelising movement in the factory district.

"(5) The need of a public voice to help these needed reforms in the shape of a local Christian paper.

"As to the first point:

"Certain things can be done. We advise the following plans for uniting the churches:—

"(1) Secure the co-operation of all the churches in any common benevolent or reform movement that is so universal in its appeal to mankind that Christian disciples can and will unite to do it, regardless of differences in creeds and customs. Such a work is Sunday reform in Markham. We are convinced that the churches of every denomination will unite in a movement for a better Sabbath in our own town.

"Another suggestion which we make along this line to unite the churches is an interdenominational newspaper, that shall advocate the reforms our town needs, and give us what the Christians of all the churches seem agreed we ought to have, and that is, a paper we are not ashamed to have come into our homes. The present is a very good time to organise such a paper, owing to the fact that our present daily paper is notoriously incompetent and bad from every point of view.

"Another suggestion for uniting the churches is the establishment of cottage prayer-meetings in neighbourhoods which contain members of different denominations.

"Still another means of church union is opened to us in a combined effort to close the saloons in Markham. They are a common danger to every home. They are so recognised by the fathers and mothers in all the churches. We recommend a

simple organisation, which shall embrace every man who votes, and every woman who prays, and all who want to see the saloon outlawed, to come together and use every effort to rid Markham of this unmitigated evil. If the pastors and church members of all the denominations in Markham will thus unite to fight the common enemy of us all, we can have our way in this matter.

"(2) We suggest under the head of a Christian Sabbath, that we study into the facts as they are to-day in Markham. That we pledge ourselves not to travel on Sunday trains, abandon the regular habit of going after the Sunday mail, or purchasing merchandise, and begin a study of ways and means to prevent all unnecessary labour in the town.

"(3) The need of abolishing the saloon has already been mentioned. We feel that this battle is distinctively the battle of the churches. If the Christian people, members of the churches, do not organise to kill this devil, who will? In Markham we have fifteen of these soul-destroying institutions. They have cost us untold suffering in the family life, and immense sums of money. And yet the churches of Markham, without the help of a single other organisation, could make the saloon outlaw if they would only act together.

"(4) As to the factory district: There is a feeble mission work now established there by the Methodists. But what is needed is the general pouring of a large army of Christian workers into that part of the city; with a steady, intelligent study of whatever conditions are wrong there, so that they can be righted.

To do this will require a united Christian sentiment in Markham. We are prepared at some near future time to propose a plan to the other churches which we will submit to them in a mass meeting called for the purpose.

"(4) Lastly, as to the Christian newspaper which Markham needs.

"No one denies our need of it. The only question is one largely of expense. But Markham has an aggregate attendance in its twelve churches of fifteen hundred people. Add to these a large number of business men who are not church members. but who would be glad to see a good paper in Markham, and we could easily count on from two thousand to two thousand five hundred subscribers in the town and county of a wide-awake, pure, clean, intelligent newspaper.

"We believe there is enough intelligence, wealth, and power in our combined churches to establish such a paper. A partial canvass has already been made by Brother Cameron and myself, and we believe the necessary money can be obtained to put such a paper as we need into the homes of Markham. It would be a paper owned and controlled by the Christian people of the town. It would be non-partisan in municipal affairs. In national politics it would be the aim to give, in different columns, a fair and Christian view of the great questions upon which the best men in the different parties differ, with a view to influencing the citizens to that course which will benefit the whole nation.

"There are serious difficulties in the way of such a

paper. There are also serious difficulties in living generally. At the same time, most of us want to keep on living and succeed in doing so. Such a paper as we have suggested will not be perfect. It will be edited and published by weak, imperfect men and women, not by angels. But there is no question about our need of a good paper in Markham, and we believe we can have one in this way. As we look at it, such a paper will do a wonderful service in uniting the churches and voicing the public opinion in the matter of the town's needed reforms."

This outline of plan of campaign for church work was vigorously discussed by the Union Church. Committees were appointed for the various kinds of work, and great enthusiasm shown. No feature of the plan called out greater enthusiasm than the proposed Christian paper. The people of Markham had suffered long from a pronounced whisky organ. Even the business men, who voted for licence, were disgusted with the local paper. Many of them were ready to support something better, and although the new movement was so radical and novel, there seemed great hopes of its being realised. When John Procter and Hugh Cameron went home that night, they had for almost the first time in their lives a passionate faith in overturning the devil's reign in Markham.

Out in Pyramid that winter, Francis Randall, far from the glow of any religious enthusiasm, such as now began to light up the church in Markham, fought his way through his parish duties like a man stricken with disease of all his faculties.

William was quick to notice the change in his

friend. They were friends now, for William knew what he owed the young Episcopal clergyman. He noted with regret the change in the once elastic step and buoyant bearing, and wondered at its cause, but the friendship of the two men had never gone so far as a mutual exchange of confidence in their love affairs.

It was one evening about two months after Francis' return to Pyramid that he came into William's room, where he was still convalescing and beginning to think of getting to work again. Randall had a letter in his hand.

"Read that," he said briefly. William read, and exclaimed in wonder—

"Why, they want you to come to Grace Cathedral! Your father's old church in Markham!"

"Yes, the Bishop wants me to take a place under the new Dean. The congregation has asked for me."

"Of course you will go?" asked William, feeling at the same time a pang of loneliness at the thought of Randall leaving Pyramid.

"I don't know," replied Randall slowly, as he turned a log of wood over in the open fireplace before which they were sitting; "I don't think I shall. I don't care to go to Markham." And he was very quiet after that. The fire from the logs threw strange shadows upon Francis Randall's face, but the real shadow was on his heart, and he wondered if it ever would be chased away by the light of love again.

CHAPTER XV.

BACK TO MARKHAM.

TWO months after Francis Randall had said to William Procter that he did not think he would go to Markham and take a place in the cathedral under the new Dean, Rev. John Procter came into the parsonage one evening just before tea-time and surprised Mrs. Procter and Jane by saying—

"I just met Dean Murray. He says Francis Randall has written accepting the position in the cathedral, and expects to leave Pyramid when his year there is up, about Christmas."

Jane was standing by the table when her father spoke. During those dreary weeks which followed Francis Randall's departure from Markham, she had gone about her school duties stubbornly but without any heart in them.

The announcement of Randall's proposed return to Markham affected her at first in a way for which she was not prepared.

She could feel her heart beating fast, and her mind was confused as to what her lover's return might mean to her. She wanted to ask her father a question, but dared not trust her voice to do so, and her

mother spoke at that moment, as Jane turned from the table and slowly walked into the kitchen.

"What place will he hold under Dean Murray?"

"He is to help in the parish work, I believe," replied John Procter. Then he added in a low voice, although Jane had shut the kitchen door when she went out—

"Eliza, I am sorry that Randall is coming here. I am sure it means trouble for Jane. She has not been the same girl since the Dean's death. I mean, since young Randall was last here. Has she confided in you?"

"No," replied Mrs. Procter, with a sigh. "There is something Jane will not tell me. I know she loves Francis Randall, and something has happened to make her wretched. But she has not told me what it is."

And, in fact, at that moment Jane was saying to herself out in the kitchen, as she tried to crowd back the tears that would come in spite of her, "I am sorry he is coming. How can I bear to meet him after what has happened!"

In this disturbed and unhappy condition of mind she awaited with dread Francis Randall's arrival.

Meanwhile, he was having a revulsion of feeling concerning his first determination not to go to Markham.

He had thought the matter out fully, and at last decided to accept the call to Grace Cathedral.

Several motives urged him to this course. The new Dean was a man who had known and sympathised with Dean Randall. The death of Randall

had caused a change of sentiment throughout the parish. A man of the Dean's views was not unwelcome as a successor. Francis Randall knew enough about him to be sure that so far as working out the problem of church union was concerned, Dean Murray would not stand in the way of any reasonable attempts.

But the ruling motive that influenced Francis Randall was a personal desire to face the very worst and live it down, or, as he sadly said to himself, live it up. If he returned to Markham and met Jane Procter, he might grow, in time, to realise that the loss of her out of his life was not so great as now he felt it to be. At a distance he lived over and over the possibilities that once he lived upon in hope. "But if this woman really had refused to be his wife because he was poor, her character was not the one that would help him in his life-work. She was not worthy of the place he had been giving her in his thought. If she really put money before love, she——"

He did not go on to argue much, but the whole matter finally resolved itself into a determination to go back to Markham and see if the chance of constantly seeing Jane Procter would not, after all, in time prove to be his salvation. If the love he had had for her was going to survive the shock of that last interview with her, his life-work was practically at an end. In any case, he was so restless and unhappy in his work at Pyramid that he felt that his usefulness there was almost gone.

When he had finally made up his mind, he told William.

"I'm going back to Markham, after all," he said one evening, as they were again seated in front of the fire.

William looked at him wistfully, and at last he said—

"Of course I don't blame you to want a better place than this. Markham and Grace Cathedral are not exactly Pyramid."

"It isn't just that," replied Randall slowly; "but the fact is, I have lost my interest in this work out here. I want to say to you, Procter, that I—I—well, never mind, I—I can't tell you—but I feel the need of a change, and that's the reason I'm going to Markham."

William did not ask any questions. A recent letter from his mother had revealed a part of Jane's story, not all, and William knew something of the cause for Randall's depression. He did not dare to obtrude or ask the other man for the confidence he withheld. And, in fact, Randall could not confide the truth to any one, least of all to Jane's brother.

When the time came for Francis' departure, Pyramid realised what it was about to lose. William Procter felt deeper than others.

"You'll have to take up my fight against the gambling dens, Procter," said Randall, as he walked over to the station the day he finally left. He spoke with a sad smile and somewhat lightly, but he had no idea that his words carried any weight with them, or were really taken in earnest by his friend.

But when Francis Randall had gone, and William turned back to his little room and remembered that

he was to resume his mill duties the next day, he was unable to shake off the impression that somehow, in some way, he was responsible for a part of Pyramid's moral life.

With the conviction that he would, somehow, be carried, in spite of himself, into the fight that Randall had begun, he walked into the mill the next day. It was not without a curious blending of emotions that he stopped at the entrance of the mixing-room and looked again upon the place where he had so nearly met his death. In a growing seriousness the assistant superintendent of the Golconda Mill resumed his duties. And ever, that day, two voices called to him—the voice of duty to the camp which had lost its greatest-hearted champion of truth and right, and the voice of his love for that far-distant life that in the study of the Professor of Old Testament Literature at Andover, had bowed her haughty head over the manuscript of the minor prophets and cried for the hunger of a heart that could be satisfied with nothing less than love itself.

The week before Christmas, John Procter said, one evening, as he came in from his work—

"I met Francis Randall to-day. He has just come."

"How is he looking?" Mrs. Procter asked the question, while Jane made a miserable effort to appear unconcerned, as she went on with some piece of sewing; but her fingers trembled and her face flushed.

"Why, I think he looks about the same," replied John Procter. "I only saw him for a moment."

That was about all that was said; but the next morning, when Jane started to go to school, she faced the possibility of meeting Francis Randall on the street with a nervous feeling of dread that would have been absurd if it had not been so sadly tragic for her.

She usually walked past the cathedral on her way to school; it was the shortest way. But this morning she went several blocks out of the way, and felt relieved when no tall figure wearing the Episcopal dress appeared. And it was several days before she met Francis Randall, and then it happened so suddenly that she had no time to determine what she should do.

It was one afternoon, as she stepped out of the schoolroom after the day's work was done. She was tired and nervous, and had a headache. But that was nothing to the heartache that hurt her now every day.

The children were swarming all about her, and she was walking slowly. Suddenly Francis Randall turned the corner and passed her.

As he went by, he lifted his hat. Jane had wondered several times whether he would cut her entirely. But he was too much of a gentleman to do that, and besides, had he not once loved her with all his heart? Jane knew that he had looked at her as he went by. She had lifted her eyes to him long enough to be able to say to herself afterwards, "He is very pale and stern." But he had walked straight on, and without the slightest hesitation.

So that was the way they were to meet, hereafter?

Simply as bowing acquaintances? Jane had a momentary feeling of relief that she knew now what to expect. At the same time, she cried harder that night than any time since her last talk with him.

As for Francis Randall, he neither avoided nor sought any opportunity for seeing Jane that winter. As a matter of fact, they did meet at a few social gatherings, but at none of them did they ever exchange a word. Francis Randall went out very little. He was engaged upon a work which occupied nearly every evening, and it was only when his church duties compelled him that he appeared in public. It soon began to be rumoured in Markham that the popular assistant to the Dean was writing a book, but what it was, whether history or religion or a love-story, no one seemed to know.

It is quite certain that never in all its religious history had Markham experienced such a change in its church life from the time Francis Randall entered the Grace Cathedral parish. Whatever may have been the depth of his personal disappointment, the hunger and restlessness of his heart, there was no question as to his willingness to help make the union of the churches in Markham a reality.

John Procter and Hugh Cameron soon discovered that an added force had entered Markham with the coming of Randall. He was heartily in sympathy with the outline of work proposed along the line of Sunday reform, the movement against the saloon, and the Christian paper owned and controlled by the churches.

At a meeting where the three ministers met to discuss these plans, Francis Randall volunteered to make a personal canvass of the town to know what the facts were concerning Sunday desecration.

He made his canvass thoroughly, and presented it personally to each one of the ministers of Markham. Perhaps his interview with Rev. Lawrence Brown, of the Methodist Church, will illustrate, as well as any, the general method that Randall employed to bring the churches together on the Sunday question.

The Rev. Lawrence Brown had been described by John Procter in the little biographical sketch of him, as a narrow-minded, zealous Methodist, even to the extent of being discourteous to the other denominations. When he was assigned to Markham, as pastor of the First Methodist Church, he had found an Endeavour Society organised among his young people, working harmoniously with the other Endeavour Societies. He had at once reorganised the young people into an Epworth League, and changed the night of their meeting. They were now working entirely by themselves, using different subjects and plans in their meetings, and were entirely out of touch with all the other young people's church societies.

All this, Francis Randall knew more or less exactly, when he called to see the Methodist minister. But he went with the one great purpose of ignoring all this, and seeing if there was not a common meeting-ground for all the denominations on the better observance of the Lord's Day.

"You see, Brother Brown," said Francis Randall, after he had explained the reason for his call, "Markham is really in a serious condition. Every cigar and fruit store in town is open all day, baseball games are frequent, excursion trains stop here on their way to the Lake, and the theatre is beginning to give Sunday evening shows of a very cheap and vulgar kind.

"Now, the question with us ministers ought to be, How can we prevent the desecration of the Lord's Day? There is another fact in connection with the subject. A great many of our church members are the very ones who encourage the Sunday desecration the most. One of the fast paper trains that leaves the East at two o'clock Sunday morning brings a Sunday morning paper to Markham one hour before the regular time for church service. Hundreds of our church members buy these papers, and at once begin to read them before they go to church. In what condition of mind and heart are they to welcome spiritual truth when their minds are filled with the same subjects which have filled them during the whole week, politics, sport, gossip, crime, scandal, and all the rest of the vast mass of material that goes into the Sunday paper and unfits a man for religious truth?

"Again, our church members are the very ones who compel the post-office to remain open on Sunday. Immediately after the close of church services, our people flock over to the post-office. The business men open, read, and many of them answer the business letters they get, on Sunday. Meanwhile,

our postmaster and two clerks are unable to attend church, because they must look after the selfish desires of our church members, who insist on having the office open on Sunday, in order that their curiosity as to mail may be satisfied.

"Don't you think, Brother Brown, that the sermon of the modern minister is in between the upper and the nether millstone, the Sunday paper before it, and the mail after it? It makes a very poor sort of Sunday sandwich for religious nourishment. And it does seem as if we must begin to do something, or Markham will become a place where the Sabbath will be utterly held in contempt, and we shall inevitably be punished by God as the Jews were when they, as a nation, profaned the command to keep the day holy."

"I believe you are entirely right in the matter!" replied the Rev. Lawrence Brown, with an emphasis that astonished Francis Randall.

But in point of fact the astonishment was on the other side also. The Methodist pastor asked himself several times, while Randall was speaking, "When did an Episcopal clergyman ever before call on me, or call me brother?" There was something very winning in Randall's manner. The Methodist man, a plodding, overworked man, poorly paid, not very broadly educated, but sincere and honest according to his views, felt a little flattered by this interview with this brilliant young Episcopal clergyman who had already written a number of short stories, and was said to be at work on a book. He had an awe of an author. And Francis Randall's unaffected.

simple, hearty manner, so free from churchly superiority, really made a strong impression upon him.

"What will you do, in connection with the other ministers, about this Sunday question?" asked Francis, after the other man had expressed himself so heartily.

"Why, what would you suggest?" asked Mr. Brown cautiously, but willingly.

"Will you preach a series of sermons on Sunday observance, to begin with?"

"Yes, gladly."

"Will you ask your congregation to vote to send a petition to the town council to pass an ordinance forbidding baseball, Sunday theatres, and the like?"

"Yes, I'll do that."

"Will you urge your business men not to read the Sunday morning papers, and wait for their mail until Monday morning?"

The Rev. Lawrence Brown hesitated before he answered this question. There were several business men in his church that would not take such an exhortation as that kindly. But whatever other faults the Methodist pastor had, he was not wanting in the genuine courage of his convictions.

"Yes, I am ready to do that," he said at last. "At least, I am ready to exhort them to give up those habits. I have my doubts about any of them paying any attention to my requests, however."

"That is another matter," replied Francis Randall,

with a sad smile. He stayed a little longer, and finally went away with the feeling that so far as the pastor of the Methodist Church was concerned, he would meet with the other pastors of Markham on the Sunday question.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FATHER MORRIS.

WITH the encouragement which this interview brought to him, he proceeded to call upon every other pastor in Markham, and found that every one of them was practically of the same opinion in regard to the necessity for a better Sunday. All of them, with the exception of the Adventist brother, agreed to do what Randall asked, and even he declared that he would not hinder any movement for the better life of Markham.

When he had completed his round of the churches, Randall reported to John Procter and Hugh Cameron.

"The fact is," he said, after they had discussed the matter, "the Sunday question, as it is at present in Markham, is one of the large planks upon which all the denominations can and will stand. There is practical unanimity among the churches as to the need of taking action together. It is a common danger to religious life, and requires a common effort against it."

"How about Father Morris?" asked Hugh Cameron suddenly.

"What! The Catholic priest?" asked Francis

Randall, starting and looking earnestly at the Presbyterian minister.

"I hadn't thought of him," said John Procter gravely. They were all three silent a moment. Never in all the history of Markham had the Catholic priest taken any part with any other church in any capacity.

"Do you know Father Morris?" asked Hugh Cameron, turning to Randall.

"My father knew him quite well. He once did Morris a great favour. Mother mentioned it the other day. I'll go and see him, if you say so, and find out if he will act with us on the Sunday reform plan."

"It will not do any harm, and may do much good," said John Procter thoughtfully. "He has a large influence over some of the factory people."

"I'll go and see him," said Randall, as he went away. He did not find time to make the call until Saturday of that week, and he approached the priest's house and anticipated the interview with him in a spirit of greater curiosity and excitement than he had felt for a long time.

When he was asked by a servant to come in and take a seat in the stuffy little parlour which was the priest's reception-room, he felt strangely embarrassed by his surroundings.

There was a plaster paris figure of Christ on the Cross, immediately over his head on the wall, and another smaller one of ivory on a bracket opposite the place where he sat. Two or three dusty medallions representing different saints, and a picture of Mary, hung on the wall at the end of the room,

over a small cabinet of books. The priest's house was built on the side wall of the church. Francis Randall, sitting there waiting for Father Morris, could hear the organ. It was the best organ in Markham. Its deep pedal notes vibrated through the building, and the little parlour trembled with the music, which was an old Gregorian chant.

Francis Randall waited some time before the priest appeared. When he finally came into the parlour, Francis rose and faced him, and even in the short time before either man spoke, he rapidly traced the features of the priest, and tried to form some estimate of his probable action in the Sunday question.

Father Morris was clean-shaven, like all priests. That was a part of his creed. He wore the dress of the Catholic Church, and round his neck a slender gold chain, at the end of which, near his waist, hung a small white cross. His face was pale, but when he smiled, which was seldom, it became animated, and even dignified. The opposite is true of most faces. He was a small man, and by the side of Randall he seemed even smaller.

He came slowly into the parlour, and Francis waited for him to speak.

"Pardon me, I did not understand from the servant the name," the priest said, with a stiffness which Randall could not tell whether habitual or suited to his feelings at the time.

"Randall, Rev. Francis Randall. I am Dean Murray's assistant, at Grace Cathedral. You knew my father, the Dean, though I believe we have never happened to meet before."

"Oh!" the priest said it with a swift and almost suspicious look at Randall. "Will you be seated? Yes, I knew your father quite well."

He stopped suddenly, as if he had broken off a sentence in his mind, and Randall sat looking at him in some perplexity as to how he should explain his errand. The man's attitude was not repellent, but, on the other hand, neither was it inviting.

"I have come on a somewhat singular errand, Father Morris," he began slowly. "But I feel sure you will listen to it kindly when I tell you that your church will be the gainer by what I want to propose to you now."

Again that look of suspicion crossed the priest's face, and he looked at Randall doubtfully.

"It is with reference to the money your father, the Dean, loaned me several years ago."

It was Francis Randall's turn to look surprised. He knew that his father had helped the priest at a time of peculiar difficulty in Father Morris' affairs. There were no papers recording the transaction, except a memorandum of the Dean's which Francis and his mother had found several days after the Dean's death. Francis did not know the singular circumstances under which the priest obtained the money, nor how far the acquaintance between his father and the priest had passed.. He only knew the amount of the loan was large, and had never been paid back.

"No, I did not come to see you about that," he said frankly, looking directly at the priest. "My father had no record other than a statement of the fact."

Father Morris looked a little uneasily at Randall. Then his face cleared, and he seemed to show, for the first time, his real nature underneath the Catholic dress and the chain and cross.

"Mr. Randall," he said, with a sincerity which no one could doubt was genuine, "years ago your father made me his grateful debtor by the loan of a sum of money which, to the best of my knowledge, saved my old mother and two sisters, in Limerick, from starving. It was during the famine of '76. That money has been saved during all these years, and I now have nearly the entire sum, and will pay it back to you within a year."

The priest suddenly grew very grave, and his voice sounded far off. The organ notes pulsed softly through the wall.

Francis Randall looked at the man in astonishment. There was more here than appeared on the surface. But the priest's story was evidently told. All, at least, that he was ready to tell.

"It was not the money. I appreciate your effort to repay it. When the time comes, perhaps you will let me know more?" Francis asked, with a gentle courtesy that took account of the fact that here in the stuffy little parlour was some romance, some human tragedy that he had no right, as yet, to probe into.

"Yes, perhaps." Again the priest's tone was doubtful; but Randall thought it was relieved by a note of personal sadness.

"I will come at once to my errand with you," he said, and he was still absolutely in the dark as to Father Morris' probable action.

He went on rapidly to tell of the action already taken by the other ministers and churches, and ended by saying very frankly—

"Now, brother" (Randall unconsciously used the term in his great interest for the subject), "will you throw the weight of your influence in your church for a better Sunday in Markham? Will you preach on the subject?"

It was a significant pause that followed. Randall was wondering if Father Morris hesitated because he did not want to seem to take directions for church work from a man of another church outside of the Catholic.

"Yes, I am willing to do that," the answer came at last, slowly. "Of course, you understand, Mr. Randall, we do not hold to the strict interpretation of Sunday that prevails in many Protestant communions?"

"I have to confess my ignorance largely of your views," replied Randall, with a smile.

"It makes no difference. I will undertake to make my people see the needs of which you speak. There is no question that many of them are foolishly spending their time and money in Sunday amusements."

Francis felt that his point had been gained, but he ventured one more step.

"Father Morris, when the other churches begin very soon, as they are planning to do, a campaign against the saloon in Markham, will you and your church join us in that fight?"

The change that swept over the priest's face was startling. The lower jaw stiffened, the hands

clenched tight on the arms of the chair, and the emphasis of his reply left nothing to be desired on Randall's part.

"So help me God, Randall, I will join you or any other man in common cause against the drink traffic. Have I not been for years pleading with my people to let the stuff alone? Yet not even the power of the Catholic Church has availed here in this town to stay this sin. Is your Protestant Church guiltless of sin in the matter of licensing and supporting the saloon?"

"No, to our shame be it said," replied Randall. He was simply astonished at the priest's answer.

He went out on the street in a conflict of emotions. The interview had surprised him. There was more in Father Morris than he had supposed. Connected with the loan of the money was some tragic occurrence deeper even than the one mentioned by the priest. The effort he had been making all these years to pay the money back proved him to be honest. But the final decision concerning both the Sunday and the temperance questions stirred Francis Randall and John Procter and Hugh Cameron to greater hopefulness. They began to see something now of the dawn of new days for Markham.

It was during the days that followed, stirring days for Markham, as all the churches began the campaign for a better Sunday, that an incident in the experience of William Procter must be noted, because of its ultimate bearing on all the events that belonged to the Miracle at Markham.

Miss Rebecca Phillips sat in the room next to

her father's study one winter evening, trying to read a recent novel.

The Professor was in his study, still labouring over his notes for the volume on the minor prophets.

It was a wild winter night in Andover. The snow lay very deep on the hill, and the wind was tossing the branches of the great elms out in front of the Seminary buildings.

The evening mail was late. But at last the Academy boy, who carried it to the professors' houses, rang the bell, and Rebecca answered it.

She came back into the sitting-room with a paper. There were no letters.

The postmark was Markham, O. The handwriting was Jane Procter's.

Rebecca sat down in front of the open fireplace, and slowly tore off the wrapper and unfolded the paper.

It was *The Pyramid Miner*, and dated only a few days back.

She turned at once to the article in the paper that was marked, and read the following :—

William Procter, who has been assistant superintendent of the Golconda, Sewell's Mill, has given up his position there, and taken to preaching.

Rebecca stared at the sentence hard, and read it again. But there was more.

There has been some trouble at the Golconda between Procter and Sewell. Procter was one of Rev. Francis Randall's friends, as was natural, seeing Randall saved his life at the time of Procter's accident. The campaign begun by Rev. Randall against the gambling dens of Pyramid

stopped when the reverend gentleman had a call to his father's old church in Ohio. William Procter, who once was a theological student, and expected to enter the ministry, has taken up his old fight, and begun a series of meetings in Mason's Hall. So far, they have been crowded. He has, to our mind, undertaken a big job. But he seems to have grit and nerve. We say, let him have fair play, and may the best man win.

The paper's almost brutal indifference to the results did not at first touch Rebecca's mind. She was sorely agitated by the fact that William was actually preaching. Under what conditions and difficulties, she could only vaguely guess. But the old quarrel, which had resulted in the breaking of her engagement, seemed to her, under this new movement, to be insufficient. She had judged William Procter hastily when he decided to give up the ministry. She had judged him to be lacking in strength of decision, and she had a horror of vacillating characters. But she had never ceased to love him. Would this action on William's part make possible their union some time?

She did not take the paper in to show her father. But she sat by the fire a long time with her hands folded on her lap. The Professor's pen scratched away on the manuscript. The wind roared over the hill. And Rebecca Phillips looked into the fire and wondered if the future would bring to her again the joy that once she knew.

That same winter brought to Francis Randall, also, an experience which shaped his work and decided, in a large measure, his future.

He had never been so busy. The growing union

of the churches in Markham had given him an opportunity to use his powers in a great variety of ways. He had plunged into his work of church union with a tremendous energy that helped him, so he thought, to forget Jane Procter. In reality, he never forgot her. He saw her seldom. But deep down in his heart the old fire burned. It would not go out, and all his struggles did not suffice to quench it.

There were, however, times when he grew absorbed in his writing. It was true that he was writing a book. It was one more attempt on his part to satisfy his ambition for mental relief. How far he had succeeded with the book he could not tell. He had never written a long story. He was very timid of pronouncing judgment on his own work.

But the book had proved to be absorbing at the time of its writing, at least, and one night he finished it. It was a novel of purpose. He had grown to love his characters, and with a regret that was excusable he wrote the last sentence, and after a fashion said good-bye to the hero and heroine whom he had happily married after a long and difficult series of situations.

He was sitting in his little room, and beginning to wonder if any publisher would accept the book, and if so, whether the public would find it worth reading, when his mother knocked at the door.

"My dear," she said, as Francis rose and opened the door and insisted on her coming in and taking the one easy-chair in the room, "have you heard the news from Mr. Procter's?"

"No, mother," Francis answered, and a sudden fear clutched at his heart, and he turned cold and trembling.

"Your father's old friend, Dr. Gilbert, just stopped to say that Jane is very ill with typhoid,—a sudden and serious case. Francis, my heart aches for you! Can even your mother comfort you?"

"No," replied Francis Randall. He looked with dull eyes at his book, which he had just finished, and then at his mother, and his heart reproached him. Of what value was his book to him now? Or anything else?

"I did not mean that, mother," he said, after a pause. Then he sat down suddenly, and put his head between his hands. He rose, and his mother was near him. He kissed her, but did not say a word. He went out into the hall. It was then ten o'clock. A great snowstorm was beginning. He put on his coat and hat.

"I'm going over to John Procter's to inquire," he said; and went out into the storm.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MESSAGE FOR JANE.

WHEN Francis shut the door of his house and started through that gathering snowstorm towards John Procter's, the tumult in his heart and mind was far greater than the physical tempest that howled around him. Fight against the feeling as he might, he knew that he still loved Jane. The news of her sudden and serious illness gripped his heart with a violence that emphasised the slumbering passion of his life, and told him that, right or wrong, he had not been able to shut her out as unworthy.

Had he misjudged her? He had given her no chance to reply to him, or defend herself from the charge that he had made—the charge that it was because he was poor that she would not marry him. How did he know, after all, that she had not spoken that one sentence thoughtlessly, without really meaning it? And yet he had condemned her swiftly, at once, and without leaving her any possible opportunity to defend herself. Had not her pale face told of an inward suffering that day he met her, as she was coming out of school? Might she not love him in spite of herself, and be happy with him yet, in spite of——

He staggered through the storm with no definite idea about what he would do when he reached John Procter's. He was possessed with a terrible fear that this woman whom he had never ceased to love, was dying, and that he had done her an injustice, and perhaps missed the happiness that might have been his with a little more patience, a little more forbearance.

The light was burning in John Procter's study. Randall went to the side door and knocked.

John Procter opened the door, and at sight of Randall he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

Randall spoke: "I heard that Jane was very ill—I came to inquire——"

"Come in," said Procter, who understood at once the situation.

Randall entered the study, and at once sat down, and as he had done when his mother announced the news, he put his head between his hands for a moment. He then looked up and spoke steadily, looking John Procter full in the face—

"I hardly need to tell you, Mr. Procter, that I have loved Jane for several years. You must know, also, that there has been a misunderstanding between us. I find that it has not changed my feelings. The news that she was dangerously ill——"

"She is dangerously ill," repeated John Procter very gravely.

"Perhaps likely to die——" continued Randall, with a great effort.

"Likely to die," repeated John Procter, shading his eyes from the light of the fire.

"Brought me over here to-night. I don't know that I can do anything——" went on Randall desperately. "But I had to come. Is there no hope?"

"The doctor says there is some hope."

But John Procter spoke without hope himself, and Francis Randall was quick to note his tone.

There was silence between the two men. The storm outside had increased steadily in violence.

Mrs. Procter suddenly came into the study. She greeted Francis without much surprise. Indeed, the mother knew everything; at least, all except Jane's miserable secret about that last interview with her lover. Already in her delirium Jane had said more than once, "I DO love you, Francis!" and her mother knew she was going over the whole scene again.

"Jane has been working very hard in school lately," said Mrs. Procter, in answer to some question which Randall involuntarily asked. "When the breakdown came at last, it was very sudden."

John Procter had slipped out of the room. Francis rose, and Mrs. Procter held out both her hands to him. He took them, and told her what he had told John Procter, and more. Only, he could not tell quite all. That seemed like Jane's secret.

Mrs. Procter tried to comfort him. But she was honestly in great perplexity. The probability of Jane's death increased, rather than lessened, her doubt as to what she ought to reveal of Jane's remarks in her unconscious condition.

"Will you tell Jane one thing, Mrs. Procter?" asked Randall, after a pause. He hesitated, but

went on firmly enough. "If she recovers consciousness before—before—the end, will you tell her that I still love her, that I have not been able to put her out of my heart?"

"Yes, I will tell her——"

Mrs. Procter promised, with tears running over her face.

Francis Randall prepared to go out into the storm.

"The fever will have to run its course. It may be many days before——"

"I will let you know," replied Mrs. Procter, and Francis Randall went out into the tempest.

He stopped at the corner, where the snow blew in masses of drift, and looked back at the lighted upper window, the sickroom. The woman he loved was there, dying, he said. He looked a long time, careless of the storm. Then he slowly went home, and the whole force of the white storm seemed to weigh him down and add to his years. For he had lived very much since his mother told him that Jane Procter was not likely to live.

In the days that followed that night, Francis Randall did many things mechanically, from force of habit, as he had trained himself to do them.

Among other things he sent his book to a well-known publishing firm in New York, and then forgot all about it. His interest in the book had died out of him from that night when he first learned of Jane's illness. Every day he heard, in some way, how she was. Mrs. Procter, obedient to her promise, sent word often to the manse. But neither she nor

John Procter knew until afterwards, that night after night Francis Randall went by the house and stayed long by that same corner where he had stopped before, looking up at the light in the upper room where the trained nurse was helping Mrs. Procter battle with the physician for the life that feebly fluttered and almost went out several times in that mysterious period between two and four o'clock in the morning, when so many souls leave their tenement.

At last the crisis came. One night, when the storm broke again over Markham, and drifted great banks of snow through the streets, and piled it high over fences and buildings, the weary watchers by Jane's bedside noted that change which marks the soul's approach to the mysterious other world. The forces of the body and spirit had struggled long for the mastery. The wan faces of nurse and mother, the stern sadness of the father and doctor watched the struggle culminate. And at last, as dawn broke through the storm, Jane's body, slowly, as if reluctant to continue the earthly fight, released itself from the touch of the last great enemy, and those who loved her knew that she would live. When the doctor said that the crisis was passed, and life had conquered, Mr. and Mrs. Procter broke down. John Procter went into his study. Mrs. Procter soon followed him there. And, after a moment of rejoicing together, they sent word to Francis Randall.

His mother brought him the news, and he received it in silence. His heart went out in a great wave of thankful prayer. After a moment he said, "Mother, God has spared her for some good reason."

"My son, I pray He has spared her that you may have joy again."

"Perhaps, mother," replied Francis. Nevertheless, during the next few hours he wondered if Mrs. Procter would tell Jane what he had asked her to tell in case Jane had recovered consciousness only to die. The first time he called at the house, Mrs. Procter told him that she had not said anything to Jane yet.

"Do you want me to say anything now?" Mrs. Procter asked, as Randall sat, pale and troubled, looking at her.

"No,—I think it would be better, on the whole, not to——" replied Francis slowly.

Then he went back to his work, feeling that Jane's illness had not really changed the relations that existed before. It had emphasised his love for her, it had reminded him that she was still the one woman in all the world to him, but could he assume any change had happened to Jane? Could he venture to break the silence, or approach her with any more assurance than he had before, that she repented of her decision and was ready to give her heart to him in spite of his lack of wealth?

In this uncertainty he simply did what a man of his simple-hearted nature would do, he took up his work again, and waited. If Jane ever changed, ought she not, in some way, to let him know it? Could he, in any case, again presume upon the possibility that she might love him? It might place her in a critical position, but, somehow, he felt that he must wait for her to let him know what the future was to be.

During this time, while Jane was slowly recovering, word came one day to Francis Randall that his book had been accepted by the publishers. It was a surprise to him. He had anticipated refusal. The terms offered him were ten per cent. royalty on all sales after the first edition had been sold.

He at once wrote, accepting the terms, revised proof as it was sent to him, and then, in the time while the book was being prepared for the public, he again forgot it largely, or at least he did not have any great hopes of its popular success.

One reason for this feeling, or lack of feeling, rare in a young author over his first book, was due to the events which made Markham famous that winter. As he was one of the central figures in all that remarkable series of movements, Francis Randall may be pardoned if the excitement of his church work absorbed so large a part of his best thought and enthusiasm.

For the Sunday reform begun by the churches had swept Markham like a fire. Even the sneering comments of the daily paper had not been able to stop the tide that rose and overwhelmed all opposition.

There had been one Sunday when every church had taken action together. Eight of the churches had continued the subject in a series of sermons and addresses. Scores of the business men who belonged to the churches had united in a pledge to keep a better Sunday. An appeal had been made successfully to the Post-Office Department, and the office was actually closed on Sunday at last, in spite of the frantic outcry made by the paper and the editor's

wholesale denunciation of the reform as puritanical and bigoted.

Nor was that all. The reforms suggested by John Procter and Hugh Cameron to their people were gradually taken up by the people of the other churches, and, in details, Markham's Sunday began to be talked about in other towns on the same line of railroad. The women organised and secured pledges that were kept by the men, to discontinue their subscriptions to the Sunday papers brought in by the newspaper train Sunday morning.

The list of subscribers actually fell off two-thirds. The man who delivered the papers from the train was at once aware that something had happened, and for the first time he began to ask questions of the news-dealer who supplied the carriers at the station.

"What's struck your old town?" he asked the first Sunday morning after the subscriptions fell off. The train had a little longer wait than usual, on account of a hot-box.

"The preachers have been having a go at the papers," replied the news-dealer, with an oath. "This blamed reform business will be the death of this town if it goes on. It'll be Sunday all the time here, after a while, and they won't even let you toot your whistle, for fear of disturbing the Sunday schools."

The man on the train looked thoughtfully at the other one. He was a married man, and he had a wife and three children living in Buffalo. He saw his wife three times a week, and his children when they were asleep, and he had not been inside of a church on Sunday for six years.

"I wouldn't mind a little reform business myself," he said to himself, as the train moved away from Markham, to carry its papers to the next town, where hundreds of church members were impatiently waiting for their Sunday morning paper, and telephoning to the station to know why the train was late. And yet we continue to go to church and listen complacently to sermons about the thankful hearts we ought to have for the privilege of worship in God's house on the Lord's Day. Meanwhile, the man who seldom sees his children, except when they are asleep, is rushing over the continent on the newspaper train that our selfishness and theft of God's time keep moving. Who will be to blame if that man's soul comes into the kingdom and up to God's judgment bar starved and feeble at the last great day?

But the Sunday reform in Markham did not stop with the Sunday paper and the post-office. It began to have an influence in the family circles, and led to a movement in which the hired girl question began to be agitated in a wise and helpful way.

The women in several of the churches began to discuss in their club and society meetings the best way of spending Sunday. And this led to an unexpected development of the vexed question of help in the home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE MARKHAM PLAN."

IT happened that during one of these discussions Mrs. George Wilson was present.

Mrs. Wilson was the richest woman in Markham. She was a widow, and had one son, who was studying law in Columbus. She had been spending a large part of the year in Columbus with her son, but had returned to Markham a few days after Jane had passed the crisis of her illness.

Mrs. Wilson was a member of the Episcopal Church, and one of its most liberal givers. She had known and respected Dean Randall, and was one of the members who had supported him during the days of his trouble before the trial. At the same time, she was regarded as the social leader in Markham, and a woman of very great influence.

"I'll tell you my opinion of the Sunday question, so far as my girls are concerned," said Mrs. Wilson, after the discussion had become very animated. "I keep a cook and a general housemaid, as you all know." Mrs. Wilson was an unusually frank woman in the disclosure of her household affairs, "and they are both German girls, and very religious. That does not mean that they are necessarily over-pious;

but I've noticed that very often the people that hire help are not half so Christian as the help they hire. That's not the subject, perhaps. But Sundays I have always tried to make an easy day for the girls, so that they could go to church as much as I do. I used to give special dinners on Sunday, invite in half a dozen friends, and have an extra social time of it; but I was cured of that by a girl I had about that time. She made me ashamed of the practice, and I've given it up. Tell you about it some time. A good many church members make their girls in the kitchen work harder Sundays than any other day. It's a great mistake to have Sunday company. My idea is, if you treat the hired girl right, you will generally get right treatment in return. That has been my experience."

A storm of protest arose over this last sentence. Not even Mrs. Wilson's good-natured superiority of leadership could drown the loud denial on the part of other ladies to the effect that time and again they had treated their girls in the most generous and Christian manner, and had repeatedly been met with ingratitude, a breaking of promises, and general lack of appreciation of favours extended by the mistress.

Finally someone appealed to Mrs. Murray, the wife of the Dean, for her opinion.

Mrs. Murray was a gentle, modest woman, slow to express herself, not because she lacked character, but because she had a very deep respect for more positive natures than her own. When she did speak, however, she had a hearing, and her opinion carried weight.

"I have been thinking," she said timidly, "that this

vexed hired girl question will never be settled to any one's satisfaction until the Christian housekeepers and the Christian girls who work come together to discuss the whole matter on a purely Christian basis. If we could get all the Christian women in Markham to meet with all the Christian hired girls in the town for a mutual discussion of how best to better matters on both sides, I believe it would do a great deal of good."

It was surprising to notice what a hush fell over the company at this proposition. It was, perhaps, even more surprising to many that Mrs. Wilson approved of it.

"I'll be the one to start some kind of an organisation like that, to bring mistress and maid together for the good of both sides. I'm not a very good Christian, but I believe Mrs. Murray has suggested the only real solution for the difficulty," Mrs. Wilson said, with a positive strength that added wonderfully to the gentle, quiet opinion of the Dean's wife.

They talked the matter over for a long time. And before they went home, the women of that club circle, numbering some of the most influential women in Markham, had taken the first steps towards a reform of the family life that changed the habits and revolutionised the customs of hundreds of homes, not only in Markham, but also throughout the country. What they did, and how it was done, are all a part of the Miracle at Markham, and will be told in its place, but it was simply part of that tremendous movement for Christian union, which unconsciously was overturning old traditions and making impossible

again the old and useless customs of a lifeless creed. The only creed that is worth anything is the one that is lived. Markham, for the first time, was beginning to live its religious convictions, and the inevitable result was a vivifying of ALL its habits.

It would be neglecting the largest source of the power that made all this transforming in the life of Markham possible, if we failed to describe the special series of prayer services that became such a feature of Markham's religious life that winter, that in a short time they became known as "The Markham Plan."

Its very simplicity and directness appealed to the best people in all the churches, from the time that the revival, begun in John Procter's and Hugh Cameron's Union Church, began to make its influence felt in every church.

The plan, in brief, was as follows:—

The town of Markham was regularly built up in squares, each square containing an average of about twenty-five houses. It was found, after a careful canvass of the facts by John Procter, that at least two-thirds of the people in each block belonged to some church in Markham. Out of that number could be found, in nearly every case, some earnest man or woman who could be depended upon, particularly under the religious impulse that prevailed, to take the lead in organising the whole block in which he lived into a series of evening prayer-meetings, held in turn in every house in the block. In other words, the Christian people in each block in Markham were organised that winter to

do house-to-house work in the locality nearest to them, not going outside of the square in which they themselves lived.

The result of this simple but very definite and hand-to-hand religious work soon began to show itself.

The first immediate result noticeable was a drawing together of the people who lived in the same square. Entering a neighbour's house to call upon him, or even to eat with him, may not have much effect in drawing people together in real sympathy or in purpose. But the minute neighbour begins to pray with neighbour, there is apt to be a closer, tenderer feeling. The religious feeling in men is deeper than any other.

So it came to pass that winter in Markham that people who had lived for years in the same block without really knowing one another, became acquainted on a religious basis. The result of that acquaintance grew in meaning as the winter went by.

Another immediate result was the inevitable blotting out of old sectarian lines. In some squares in Markham, John Procter, in the midst of his census of the town, had found members of all the different churches. The moment the prayer-meetings began, the house-to-house gatherings of necessity brought all the neighbours together on a prayer equality. They discovered, as they went from house to house, that there was seldom anything sectarian said in a prayer. Almost all honest prayers are purely Christian. Men do not pray "baptism" or

"apostolic succession," or other peculiar tenets of denominational belief. At least, they do not when moved as the people of Markham were moved by the Holy Spirit that winter. The petitions were cries for more of the Christian graces, longings for the conversion of wayward sons and careless daughters, wives beseeching for their husbands who were out of the church, teachers asking for wisdom to lead their classes into the kingdom. There is no sectarianism in such prayers as those. Even Father Morris did not forbid his Catholic parishioners from attending these meetings. More than one devout Catholic opened his doors when the turn came to his own house, and for the first time in Markham's history the Catholic neighbours in many of the squares, kneeled down by their Protestant neighbours and appealed to the same God for a better life. It was significant that while the priest himself never appeared at any of these gatherings, he never was known to oppose, outwardly, the attendance of his own church members. Nothing less than the profound moving of the Holy Spirit made such a fact possible.

Another marked result of the "praying squares," as they came to be known, instead of "prayer circles," was the gain made in a certain concentration of religious energy to certain fixed, and in one sense, narrow limits. No weather was so stormy that the people could not with comparative ease get together when they simply moved from one house to another in the same square, without crossing any streets. It was remarked more than once that

winter, that while Markham had more than the usual number of severe storms, the prayer-meetings were not materially affected by them. For the first time within the knowledge of Markham church members, the weather did not enter into their calculations about a good prayer-meeting.

A stranger to the story of Markham cannot understand all that happened there that winter and the following year, unless he understands the quiet but transforming influence of these "praying squares." It is because of this fact that they have been described somewhat in detail. It is doubtful if all the preaching in Markham from the pulpit on Sundays did as much to revolutionise the denominational sentiment as the prayer-meetings. The Miracle at Markham was possible because the element of prayer was put into the problem of making a better town. More than once, John Procter and Hugh Cameron and Francis Randall confessed that many of the things they tried to do would have been impossible if the Spirit had not moved all through the town in the "praying squares" of Markham.

So as the winter was drawing to its close, and spring was nigh, Markham began to realise that it was entering upon a new and unusual life. The Sunday reform had surprised every one, no one more than the disgusted newspaper men and small tradesmen of Markham. The churches had, to their surprise, also found that they had a common meeting ground in the purity of the Sabbath. It was no unusual thing for John Procter, Charles Harris, Capt.

Andrews, of the Salvation Army, Francis Randall, and Rev. Lawrence Brown, the Methodist minister, to speak from the same platform at a union meeting in which the Sunday question was discussed from all sides.

But as the winter passed away, the need grew more imperative for a better daily paper. A paper owned and controlled by the churches, was the ideal that John Procter constantly held up to the people. He finally succeeded in gaining over to his view nearly every pastor in Markham. The idea was a new one, but its very originality appealed to the church people.

"We need such a paper," John Procter would say, "before we can make any successful fight against the saloons in Markham." He pointed out the fact repeatedly that the only daily that Markham had was committed wholly to the saloon element. He also emphasised the need of a paper in the homes of Markham, that would represent, at least, as Christian a life as the churches.

"If the daily paper is tearing down six days in a week a great part of what the preachers are trying to build up one day, how much headway can we make against the saloon or any form of evil? We must have some DAILY voice of Christian conviction sounding in the ears of our people to supplement the words we speak to them from the pulpit."

So John Procter kept saying, and many of the business men of Markham began to respond. A canvass began for funds to organise a daily paper which should be owned and controlled by Christian

people. The church members of Markham were made to feel that they were to be the supporters of such a paper.

The ministers of the churches made this canvass themselves, or delegated it to some of the best of their members. Dean Murray and Francis Randall both entered into the plan with a cordial spirit. The Dean was cautious but kindly in his attitude. Randall was enthusiastic about it. Frequently he talked with the Dean about it, and the older man smiled a little, but said nothing to oppose the movement.

Francis Randall, therefore, made a canvass personally of Grace Cathedral parish, to secure subscriptions for the first Christian daily of Markham. It was to be called *The Markham Union.*

He was just starting out one afternoon to see Mrs. George Wilson. The winter was over, and the spring had really come at last. He was feeling better than he had once thought possible, after the most severe winter's work he had ever known. Somehow, he seemed to think all would come right between Jane and himself after all. He had not seen her often, had not spoken to her, but the few times he had caught glimpses of her she seemed to be recovering her health and beauty. Once at a social gathering his eyes had met hers, and she had blushed and turned pale again. Was it possible she had discovered the facts about his coming to the house while she was ill? Surely Mrs. Procter could not keep all that secret from her.

He went out, and as he passed the post-office, he

went in for his mail. Among the letters was one from his New York publishers that brought the colour to his cheeks and started his pulse beating fast.

REV. FRANCIS RANDALL,
MARKHAM, O.

DEAR SIR,—Your book has to-day passed its fifth thousand, and orders are coming in rapidly. The outlook now is very promising for a large and popular sale. We have ordered another five thousand at once from the printer. Telegraph us if you have any suggestions to make as to changes in preface or cover design. We congratulate you on your success.—Very truly yours, ——.

Francis Randall would have been less or more than human if he had not been thrilled at the receipt of this letter. An author's first book is like nothing else in his affections. The possibility of what he had written going beyond a first little edition had never occurred to him. He was rarely modest for a man, and had no exalted ideas of his abilities as a writer. But he was pleased. He read the letter over again and again. As he lifted his eyes from it the last time, he saw Jane coming up the street again, coming from her school. This time she was not alone. A young man was walking by her, and as the two passed Randall, Jane's face burned. The young man returned Randall's greeting courteously, and passed on, still talking earnestly to Jane.

For the first time in his life the Episcopal clergyman felt blaze up in him a passion of almost hatred. He knew Mrs. Wilson's son, Mark, the young lawyer in Columbus. He did not know anything but good of him, but at that moment he had an agony of

suspicion at the thought of Mark Wilson and Jane together.

"She has given me her answer, though," he kept saying to himself, as he doggedly went on toward Mrs. Wilson's. "The other man has money enough. Or his mother has for him. If she wants to marry for money, evidently she has an opportunity."

So, Francis Randall, love is not blind when it comes to seeing the marks of it in other people's faces? It was with the nearest approach to bitterness of spirit that he had ever felt, that he rang the bell at Mrs. George Wilson's, and was ushered into the parlour.

Mrs. Wilson was genuinely glad to see him. She had been a firm friend of his father, the Dean, and one of his heartiest supporters in all the financial part of the church work.

Francis presented the matter of the proposed Christian daily, and was going into details when Mrs. Wilson stopped him.

"You needn't say any more. I believe in all that. Put me down for a thousand dollars, and when you want more, call again."

Francis thanked her, and after a few commonplace remarks, he rose to go.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Randall, won't you?" asked Mrs. Wilson, with a little embarrassment of manner unusual to her. "I want to ask your advice about Mark."

"Yes?" said Randall, sitting down again, and feeling vaguely that something like a crisis had come for him. But he did not feel able to put it into words.

"The fact is, that Mark is desperately in love with Jane Procter. He has been in love a good many times, but this time he is completely swept away. I don't know that I blame him. She is the prettiest and most sensible girl in Markham. I'll do anything I can to help Mark. He hasn't seen her very much, only about two weeks lately. He thinks her father and mother are not very favourable to him. Could you use your influence in any way with them? My heart is bound up in Mark. I would do anything in the world for him. You know he will have all I have when I am gone. He has all he wants now, for that matter."

Mrs. Wilson had talked on in her usual rapid fashion, wholly absorbed in the subject, and not noticing Randall's face. She now turned towards him, smiling. She was astonished at what she saw in his face. And she was still more astonished at his reply, when he finally spoke.

CHAPTER XIX.

"WHAT THE KING SAID."

"MRS. WILSON," said Francis Randall, looking straight at her, and speaking, as his habit was, slowly, "I cannot do what you ask, for the reason that I love Jane Procter myself."

Mrs. Wilson stared at him in astonishment. It was some time before she could say a word. But the man's face was eloquent of the truth.

"Of course I know nothing of all this, Mr. Randall," at last she said carefully. "You know I have been away from Markham a great deal, and no one ever hinted such a thing to me."

It was true that Francis' romance had escaped the notice of the gossips in almost a miraculous manner. But the absence of Randall in Pyramid, his apparent indifference to Jane when he returned to Markham, and a complete silence on the part of the two families, had resulted in the absence of all talk about the matter. Mrs. Wilson had no suspicion of the facts until now.

"At the same time," continued Francis, while his face grew pale under his emotion, "I ought to tell you that I have no reason to hope that Miss Procter will ever——"

He stopped suddenly, and Mrs. Wilson finished the sentence silently. She was beginning to feel the fact that this man's one romance might also be his life tragedy.

For a long time neither of them spoke. Then Mrs. Wilson said, speaking very gravely—

"Neither of us can prevent my son from trying to win Jane Procter. Mark is already in love with her. He has told me that he means to ask her to be his wife. I am sure he will do this before he returns to Columbus next week. Even the knowledge of your love for her would make no difference with him. In fact, I believe it would only hasten his action."

Francis Randall looked up. "It is for her to choose. As you say, your son is rich. He is also attractive, and successful in his profession. What more could a woman ask?"

He spoke proudly, but there was a bitterness in his tone that Mrs. Wilson interpreted right. She was a shrewd woman of the world, and it did not take much insight for her to discover a large part of Francis Randall's secret.

"I do not need to say that I regret,—I—can I offer sympathy——"

"No, I want no sympathy," said Randall, the warm blood rushing into his pale cheeks. "The only thing—you see how impossible it would be for me to——"

"Of course, I see that. How could I know. If Mark succeeds, he——"

"He succeeds on his own merits. That is all,"

said Francis, rising. Mrs. Wilson pitied him at that moment. If there had been any way in which she could have helped him, it is possible she would have done it, even at the cost of opposing her son's ambitions.

"You will, of course, respect my secret?" said Randall with quiet dignity.

"I will, as if it were sacred to my own son," replied Mrs. Wilson; and Randall went out, leaving a very much perplexed and astonished and saddened woman.

Once out on the street, he had time to think over the whole matter. He walked about until it was dark. The picture of Jane and Mark Wilson together, stood out vividly before him. He was torn with passion, and tormented at the thought of Jane's probable reply to the rich young lawyer. In spite of the fact that he had repeatedly said that Jane's answer in his own case was final, and that they could never again be anything to each other, he went through a perfect agony of fear at the thought of another man winning her.

"If she accepts Mark Wilson," he said, as he finally went home, "I shall know it is because she loves wealth more than love—and then—I shall learn to despise instead of love her. If she rejects him, I shall know that possibly there is hope for me—and then——"

He walked quietly into his study, without letting his mother know that he was home. As he took off his overcoat, he felt the letter he had received that afternoon, announcing the success of his first book.

He took the letter out, and threw it down on his desk. It meant less than nothing to him at this moment. And in the excitement and unrest of his feelings, he sat down, and laying his head on the desk, with his face touching the letter that predicted his coming fame as an author, he groaned in spirit over his love for Jane. Ah, Fame! How powerless thou art to take the place of love! A very empty thing by the side of the heart's deep longing for that which alone satisfies the heart.

The next few days were days of indescribable uncertainty to Francis Randall. More than once he met Jane and Mark Wilson on the street. Each time Jane betrayed the greatest confusion. She had not been able to avoid Wilson, and in fact all Markham was soon in possession of his secret. He did not attempt to disguise or hide his love for her. All the gossips in Markham were talking about the two. It was the general opinion that Jane would marry him. Indeed, it was asserted that they were already engaged, and that accounted for the fact that they were seen so often in each other's company.

Saturday of that week, as Francis Randall was going home from a conference with Hugh Cameron, he passed by Mrs. Wilson's. She saw him going by, and tapped on the window, and beckoned him to come in.

When he entered he saw at once what she had to say.

"Mark has gone back to Columbus," she began, with a sad smile, and yet she had a feeling of

pleasure also for this other man. "He received his answer. Jane Procter refused him."

Francis Randall experienced a feeling of relief that was indescribable in its effect on the tension of his heart and mind.

"Of course," continued Mrs. Wilson, "I do not expect you to offer me any sympathy under the circumstances. It is a hard blow for Mark. It will take him a long time to get over it. I can't blame you for the way you must feel now."

"It is difficult for me to express myself, Mrs. Wilson. I am still——"

In fact, Francis was in the dark largely as to Jane's motives in refusing to accept Mark Wilson. Only this much was clear. She had positively refused an offer of marriage from a rich man. So, after all, money alone could not satisfy her.

Saying this over to himself, Francis Randall went home, and with the beginning of the old hope again he faced his future. Should he speak to Jane again? Had she not told him plainly enough, by her action in sending Mark Wilson away, that she might listen to the other lover once more?

The following week he hesitated several times in the midst of his work, and did not know what he ought to do. Once he had met Jane on the street. The blush on her face was significant. When he passed as before, gravely, and without any other recognition except the lifting of his hat, Jane's face changed from its rush of colour to a paleness that made Randall feel a self-reproach he could not drive away. After he had passed her a few steps, he did

what he had never done before. He turned around and looked at her. As he did so, Jane also, as she turned from the main street into the one leading to her home, looked back at him. Then she hurried on faster than ever, and he went on slowly to his study, more tossed about in his mind than he had been before.

The next morning he received a letter from his publisher in New York, urging him to come on and confer about the writing and publishing of future books. He felt the need of a little change after the hard winter's work, and also hoped that during the time he was away he might come to some right conclusion as to his attitude towards Jane, and that night he took the express for New York.

The next day Mrs. Procter called at the manse on some business belonging to the churches, and while there learned of Francis' departure.

"I suppose his book has been very successful, hasn't it?" she asked Mrs. Randall.

"Yes, it has been a wonderful success, according to the publishers," replied Mrs. Randall proudly. "And, by the way, Francis left a copy here for Mr. Procter. He was going to take it over. Will you give it to him?"

Mrs. Procter had not yet seen the book, and took it home. She could not help noticing Jane's look when her father took the book and read the title: *What the King Said.*

"It's a queer title," John Procter remarked, as he turned the leaves. Like every one else who saw it, he was curious to know what the book was about.

"It has had a wonderful sale already," said Mrs. Procter, and again she noted Jane's strange expression.

"Yes," continued John Procter, a little absent-mindedly, as he turned back to the beginning of the book and began to read. "I suppose Randall will make more than most authors make on account of the unusual sale."

"You don't think he will make his fortune, do you?" Mrs. Procter asked, looking furtively at Jane.

"It's possible, I suppose," replied Mr. Procter, reading on.

Jane rose and went out of the room, and Mrs. Procter seemed disturbed over something, but did not venture to interrupt her husband, who was already deep in the opening chapter.

The next day when he came in from his parish work, he could not find the book, which he had left on his study table. He asked his wife where it was, and she said she thought Jane had taken it. And, in fact, at that moment Jane, in her room, where she had gone immediately after school, was absorbed in the story. More than once her eyes filled with tears. Once she laid the book down, and put her face in her hands, with the gesture familiar to her. Then she opened the book and went on eagerly. This man, once her lover, was farther from her now than ever. He had written a successful book. He was growing not only famous, but probably rich. Even if in some way she were to let him know that she cared more for his love than for all the money in the world, how

could he be sure that she was not now attracted by his probable fame and wealth?

So she sat reading on, her heart divided between admiration for the story and love for its author and uncertainty concerning the future. And of all the interested readers who that year acknowledged the fascination of the new book, *What the King Said*, it is safe to say none devoured its pages with the emotion that was felt by Jane Procter.

It was during Francis Randall's absence in New York that the movement for the better relation between housekeepers and servants began in Markham.

The movement belongs to the entire upward life of Markham, and in the history of the Miracle at Markham, it can be traced to the union of the Christians in their efforts to better the general condition of the town's life.

Mrs. George Wilson, with her usual energy, assisted by Mrs. Murray and other women in the different churches, met, and, after long discussion together, finally called a meeting of all the Christian girls who were at service in Markham.

It was doubted at first by a few of the housekeepers whether there were any professing Christians among the hired girls. A careful canvass of the matter, however, revealed the fact that there were a good many who not only belonged to different churches, but were liberal givers to church expenses, and, especially in the Catholic Church, devout attendants whenever their time would allow.

So it came about that one afternoon the first of a series of meetings began in Mrs. George Wilson's

house, that for real results astonished every one, and not least of all the very women who originated the plan.

At that first gathering there were present fifteen housekeepers, and as many girls. Mrs. Wilson, with an instinctive knowledge of her lack of ability to do certain things right, with a wisdom that was of a high order in its tact and far-sightedness, insisted on Mrs. Murray's presentation of the proposed plan of conference between mistress and maid. So it came to pass that the one woman in all Markham who was best fitted by her gentle Christian manner and life, was the first one to bring the subject of Christian housekeeping to the minds and hearts of that little gathering.

She proposed a very simple but effective plan of conference first. It was taken for granted that they had come together on the ground of a common desire to better the relations between the housekeeper and the servant in the family circle. On that basis, it was necessary for both sides to speak with the utmost frankness, and confer together lovingly about the smallest details that made up the life of the home.

In accordance with this plan, one of the housekeepers and one of the girls were asked to prepare for the next meeting a series of answers to the question, "What are some of the greatest needs in the service of a home?" The housekeeper to speak for her side of the question, the girl to speak for hers. A general discussion on both sides to follow.

It was astonishing to note the results that came

at once from this preliminary meeting. When the girls went away they walked in groups back to their different homes, talking over the coming meeting. The women at Mrs. Wilson's were no less impressed with the value of the step taken. Yet not even Mrs. Wilson, with all her characteristic enthusiasm, could measure the significance of the movement begun in her own house.

"It will succeed because it is on the basis of Christian conference for mutual helpfulness," Mrs. Murray finally said, in reply to one timid woman's doubt as to how the meetings would end. And she was wholly right. No other solution of such a question as that of the right relation of mistress and servant can be found except at the heart of a mutual desire on both sides to do the Christian thing.

There is also another important change which occurred in the church life of Markham that spring, which needs to be recorded in this place.

In the coming conflict which was being prepared against the saloon in Markham, John Procter and Hugh Cameron wisely decided to use, in every possible way, the young people of the Union Church. But in organising them for the coming campaign, they soon made the discovery that by far the largest part of the young people in Markham attended the Methodist and Baptist Churches. In talking over the situation, John Procter said—

"Now, Brother Cameron, what do you think about making an appeal to Brother Brown and Brother Harris, and urge them to swing their young people's societies into line with the Endeavour movement?

We find, by a careful canvass, that Brown has seventy-five people in his Epworth League, and Harris has fifty in his Baptist Union. We have forty members in our Endeavour Society. The Lutherans have thirty. The United Presbyterians have twenty. The Cumberland Presbyterians have fifteen. The Free-Will Baptists have ten. If Harris and Brown will throw the weight of their young people's societies into line with all the rest, we can do a great work for the Christian paper and the cause of temperance."

Hugh Cameron was very thoughtful for a while.

"Do you think there is any probability that the Methodists and Baptists will do such a thing?"

"I know this much," replied John Procter, with a smile, "that we have been surprised beyond measure at the miracle already wrought in Markham. Who can tell what we shall yet enjoy of the Spirit's power? I am sure from something I heard Brother Harris say the other day, that he realises, as never before, the great value of church union for Christian work."

"Will you talk with him about this union of the young people?"

"Yes, if you will interview Brother Brown about his Epworth League."

"I'll do it," replied Hugh Cameron.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PROFESSOR VISITS PYRAMID.

THE result of these two interviews was surprising, even to John Procter, who in the history of the Miracle at Markham, already had experienced some very unusual things in his church life.

Charles Harris listened quietly to John Procter's suggestions about disbanding his Baptist Union and reorganising on the basis of Christian Endeavour, and when Procter was through, he astonished him by saying—

"I have been on the point, several times this winter, of talking with you about this. Why should our young people be divided in the plans and purposes and studies of their religious life, when they are all together in their school and social life? I will arrange my society in such a way as to co-operate with all the others. If it is thought best, I will join Brother Brown in reorganising on the basis of Christian Endeavour. Your societies were first organised. Ours are not essentially different, and for the sake of the closest possible union of effort I am willing to make the outward change of organisation."

John Procter could not conceal his emotion. The tears came into his eyes as he grasped Harris' hand.

"This would have been impossible, Brother Procter, a year ago. Do you know, I believe I have been converted by the 'praying squares' this winter."

"We have all been wonderfully blessed by the presence of Christ," replied John Procter softly.

He reported to Hugh Cameron, and found that his colleague had, practically, the same report to make of his interview with the Methodist pastor. He had hinted at some difficulty with his presiding elder and his Bishop, but thought that it would not be insurmountable.

"The fact is," said Hugh Cameron, "Brother Brown spoke of the necessity of all Christians, old and young, uniting to drive out the saloon. I think that argument is the one that has most influence with him. He said he could easily agree with all the rest of us, that as long as there is a lack of union even on the part of a part of the church, we could not carry on a successful fight against the whisky power."

So the young people of Markham in time came together in their religious life. What once seemed absolutely impossible, became possible on account of the gentle, softening influence of the Spirit of Power that moved through the town. Men's hearts were larger. They saw the kingdom with a wider vision. They drew nearer together as they saw more clearly the nature of the conflict they were about to wage with one of the greatest enemies of the home and the church and the world.

All this was not accomplished at once. There were many steps to take before such a movement

could possibly be realised. There was opposition in both the Methodist and the Baptist Church to the proposed changes. But they finally did succeed in rallying most of the older people, and all of the young men and women, around the work of combining with every other Christian in Markham against the saloon.

It was during this period, and while Francis Randall was still absent in New York, that William Procter, out in Pyramid, fought his great fight, and came to know the stress and bitterness of standing almost alone in a good cause.

All the experience he had, from the time he left the mill and took up the work that Randall had begun, was telling upon him in many ways. He was, of necessity, exceedingly conscientious, or he would never have attempted a work so exacting, so unexpected in one sense, even to one as strict with himself as he was. He was living on the earnings of his pay as superintendent of the mill; but that would soon be gone, and then he must find some means of keeping out of debt.

Meanwhile he found himself borne along into the work of reform in a manner strange to himself. His meetings, which he had advertised by small dodgers scattered over the camp, were thronged. Mr. Clark, the minister who had befriended Randall, came to William's assistance nobly; but before the public meetings had been running three days, he was stricken down with a serious illness, and after that William carried on the fight almost alone.

Almost the entire sentiment of the camp was

against him, the only paper printed in Pyramid, while not openly opposed to the meetings, concealed its indifference to the result under a sneer that gave the impression readily of support for the gambling element, and William faced the fact of a whole community that was so used to the gambling habit, and so swayed by its unholy passion, that the Puritan fierceness of attack made upon it by this young man from the East roused all the worst antagonism of the ignorant and the vicious. Nevertheless, with a dogged persistence that characterised his father, he went on with his meetings. He had at least an audience. As long as people came he was determined to preach to them.

For the first time since he had left the Seminary he felt at peace with himself. Whenever he thought of Rebecca Phillips he could not crowd down a feeling of hope. He had not heard a word from her during all his illness. That telegram that had come so unexpectedly had been all. Would he ever see her or hear from her again? He asked the question many times, even during the excitement of his meetings; and while he found no answer, somehow he lived in hope—a vague but none the less a real hope—that Rebecca would some time be his again.

At this time in William's experience, and while that interest in his meetings was at its height, Professor Elias Phillips came into the sitting-room of his house in Andover with a letter, a part of which he read to Rebecca.

"It seems," he went on, commenting on the letter

"that the mines at Capstone are beginning to develop unexpected ore. The shares I bought there years ago are now above par. The superintendent of the Gem writes me to come on if I can, and investigate matters a little. Then there are the mines in Pyramid that have been in the courts so long. There is a matter of witnessing, and so on, and he says it would be well if I could come on in person, and see to my interests on the ground. I have been thinking," — the Professor removed his spectacles and looked thoughtfully at Rebecca, — "I have been thinking it would be best to make the trip, and I have been wondering if you would care to go with me."

Rebecca looked up at her father, and her face burned. What would William think if she should suddenly appear in Pyramid? But, on the other hand, why should she not go, if she wanted to? She was very proud, this daughter of the Professor of Old Testament History in Andover, and she had been in the habit generally of doing what her imperious will dictated.

"We can go during the spring vacation. That begins next week. I should very much like to have you go with me, Rebecca," said the Professor, and at no time either then or afterwards did he hint at the fact of William Procter as being anywhere in existence.

"I'll go with you, father," Rebecca answered slowly.

When the day came for them to start, she was conscious of a certain exhilaration of manner that

was new to her. But she had no presentiment of the strange circumstances under which she was to meet William Procter again.

They went to Capstone first, and after staying two days on the business of the mines they took the train for Pyramid.

The two camps were not far apart, and the Professor and Rebecca expected to reach Pyramid in the afternoon. But there was a wreck of ore cars on the road, the train was several hours late, and when they finally reached Pyramid it was eight o'clock.

They walked up the board sidewalk of the main street towards the best hotel, for which the Professor inquired, and walked slowly, for the main street of Pyramid at this time was not noted for its good order or the repair of its walks. There was an unusually large crowd on the streets, and to the Professor and his daughter, coming from the scholastic quiet and refinement of Andover, there was a bewildering amount of noise and shouting and confusion. Every saloon and gambling-house and den of the camp was running full blast, and apparently every one of them was full of men. Every now and then a revolver shot was heard. The camp had started in on one of its wild, reckless nights, and while those familiar with its night life were prepared more or less for its turmoil, the effect of it on strangers was almost startling. A light rain was softly falling, and the Professor, who had carried the old umbrella that he had used at home for many years very carefully, gripped it tight several times,

as if he meant to use it as a weapon of defence in case he was held up on the main street of Pyramid.

"This is not the place for you, Rebecca," said the Professor, as Rebecca clung to his arm a little tighter, and shrank back as they passed saloon after saloon.

"I'm not afraid," said Rebecca; and it was true that the strange sights had the effect of nerving her to a courage she really did not possess.

As she spoke, they suddenly came to a crowd of men in front of a large building, over the front of which was a cloth sign announcing that preaching services were being conducted inside.

"This must be the place where William is working," said Rebecca to herself. Before she knew it, she and her father were in the crowd which was pouring into the hall.

Professor Elias Phillips of Andover was a Yankee; that is to say, he had a full fund of curiosity. He saw the sign and the crowd, and he looked down at Rebecca.

"Shall we step in a moment and see what sort of a meeting is going on here?" he said, and it must be said for him that he had no suspicion that William Procter was the speaker in the hall.

Rebecca murmured something in assent, and in a few moments the two found themselves caught in the jam of the crowd, and were being carried into the hall. The majority were miners, but there were a few women. The Professor tightened his hold of

his umbrella. Someone pushed his hat over his eyes, but he caught it before it was knocked off his head, and at last he and Rebecca were inside the room, and fairly pushed into seats about two-thirds of the way from the front. It happened that the seats were next the broad aisle leading up to the platform.

Rebecca Phillips will recall as long as she lives the vivid impression of that night. The room was brilliantly lighted. Light was one of the things that Pyramid lavished with an unsparing hand, and William Procter knew its value in a place of preaching as well as in a gambling-house.

He had already come upon the platform with another man, and began to speak while the crowd was still coming in. He had at last made a convert, and he was a powerful one, for he had been a professional gambler, well known to every other gambler in the camp. He had come one night to hear the "young feller from Boston say his little piece," and the Holy Spirit had found and claimed him. He was as truly converted as was Saul of Tarsus, and as eager to save life now as he had been before to destroy it.

So William, exhausted himself by his efforts, continued for so long, rejoicing in such an ally as this, had brought him in this night to illustrate the gambler's tricks. The ex-gambler had brought with him a complete set of his old gambling apparatus, and setting it all out on the front of the platform, he proceeded, after a very simple account of his own conversion, to show the crowd how helpless the

young men were in the hands of the professional gambler.

For half an hour the crowd, fascinated by the sight of this professional gambler, and the demonstration he made with the faro table and the wheels of chance, and his skilful manipulation of cards and dice, remained quiet, breathlessly watching and listening.

Then suddenly some one in the rear of the hall fired a revolver towards the stage. The plastering fell down from the wall just above William's head, where the bullet had struck.

Instantly there was a yell from the audience. Shouts of "Fair play!" "No shooting!" "Put 'em out!" rose all over the house. In the midst of all the confusion, the converted gambler stood calmly by his table waiting for a chance to be heard. William dusted the plaster from his coat sleeve and remained seated. And it seemed as if the confusion would die down, when every one was startled by the sight of a tall figure in black, with a lady on his arm, pushing down the aisle towards the platform.

The Professor was roused. He saw one of his old Seminary students in peril of his life, as he supposed (and in spite of the usual lack of order in Pyramid it is possible the Professor was not far wrong that night), and he did not intend to sit quietly still and have him shot at.

Waving his umbrella, and saying something in a loud voice (Rebecca afterwards declared it was a fragment of Hebrew from one of the imprecatory

Psalms), he dragged Rebecca up on the platform, and then turned around in front of William.

William rose, and as he did so another revolver shot rang out. The Professor swung his umbrella like a baseball club, as if he thought to ward off the bullet by hitting it, and the shot struck a lamp chimney on the table and put out the light.

The whole crowd of men in the hall rose, and a tremendous scene of confusion at once began. Above all the din and noise, one voice rose clear and distinct—

"Don't shoot the lady!" It was William's voice, and he pushed Rebecca behind him as he shouted. But Rebecca the next moment turned and looked up at her lover. And not even the vivid scene of that strange meeting, and the unquestioned peril that now confronted William, could prevent the colour from mounting to her cheeks as she said, "If there is any danger, William, let me share it with you."

And it seemed to William Procter at that moment, that he was justified in feeling that all he had suffered was as nothing by the side of the joy he now experienced. It was not an ideal place to make love in, but William said, bending down nearer to her while he still protected her, "Do you mean, Rebecca, that you will share it with me for ever?"

"Yes," replied Rebecca Phillips promptly. And after that, William did not seem to care about anything else. Only as his look went out again

over the mob in the hall, his lips moved in a most passionate prayer as he stood before her, that no harm might befall the woman who had in this bewildering manner been restored to his life after the long and heart-breaking silence of days and nights of sorrow.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PROFESSOR VISITS THE MILL.

AFTER William had cried out, "Don't shoot the lady!" there had been a moment's lull in the confusion. The converted gambler, a man who had spent most of his life in rough mining camps, and knew the character of the crowd that he faced, seized that moment to appeal to the men nearest him to restore order.

The men down in the front were sober, for the most part, and the sight of Rebecca's beautiful face, pale, but not frightened, won the chivalrous sentiment of the miners who were near enough to notice that up on the platform was some unwritten romance, in which the old man with the umbrella and the young woman and William were leading characters.

A determined cry went up from the front of the hall—

"No shooting!" One well-known miner mounted the platform by the side of the converted gambler, and, drawing his own revolver, threatened to shoot down the first man that ventured to fire at a defenceless preacher, an old man, and a girl.

Quickly the disturbance died down. The men began to take their seats, and in what seemed to

Professor Phillips like an incredibly short time, everybody was ready to listen again to William Procter.

He came to the front of the platform, after his converted friend had said a few words more, and began to comment on the gambler's exposure of the profession. As he went on, he knew that for the first time since the meetings began, he really had the crowd in the grip of his appeal to it. How could he help preaching the best he knew, when all the time he was conscious that on the platform sat the woman in all the world to him, the one who had said only a few moments before that she was willing to share her life with his for ever? With an inspiration born of that knowledge, added to the fact that his Puritan convictions on the matter of gambling and every vice really amounted to the most intense horror of evil, he went on to make a passionate appeal that filled the heart of Rebecca with pride for him, astonishment at his gift of speech, and almost tearful thankfulness at what seemed to her like a marvellous escape for her lover. Even now as she listened to his unsparing denunciation of vice, she trembled for fear some angry miner in the crowd would shoot at him again. She did not know until several days afterwards, that William had been shot at several times that spring since the meetings began.

But there was no more disturbance that night, and when William was through, the crowd went out quietly enough, really impressed by the events of the evening. A few of the young men crowded up around the platform to examine the gambler's

apparatus more closely, and he took occasion to give them another exhibition of his skill at close quarters.

While he was busy with his exhibition, William was fast asking and answering questions, looking at Rebecca and her father as if he were in a dream, a very happy dream, but one from which he almost dreaded to awake at any moment.

However, the sight of Professor Phillips and his umbrella, which were very real and tangible, gradually prevailed upon his mind, and when the crowd had all gone out of the hall, and William and Rebecca and the Professor had come out upon the sidewalk, William was very much awake, and knew it.

It was somewhat late, but the Professor invited William to come to the hotel and have some supper with him and Rebecca. He had already explained how they had come into the hall on their way to the hotel.

So a few minutes later, William was seated at the table of the "Pyramid," which kept late suppers for the benefit of the habits of the camp, and while he was not hungry, he ate for the pleasure of being there in company with Rebecca and the Professor, who still had a great many questions to ask about the meetings, William's change of plans, his future expectations, and so on.

"Do you always speak under fire?" asked Professor Phillips.

"No, not always," replied William, laughing. "The meeting to-night was more exciting than usual." He

looked at Rebecca as he spoke, and she knew he was not referring to the shooting.

"Yes, I should think it might be a good school of experience for some of our young preachers in the Seminary. But if the average congregation shot at the preacher every time he said something they did not like, don't you think it would have a tendency to discourage a young preacher somewhat?"

"I should think it might," replied William, laughing again. "He would always be sure of a wide-awake congregation, however. That would be some gain, wouldn't it?"

So the meal progressed with two light hearts, at least, at the table. And the Professor, as he glanced at his daughter and his former Seminary pupil, wondered at the ever new and refreshing story of which the world never tires, even if it does sometimes wonder, the story of love.

When William went back to his boarding place that night, he carried with him the Professor's promise to visit the reduction mills the next morning. Rebecca wanted to see everything new, and found time to say to William that she wanted particularly to see the place where he had met with his accident.

William stared at this request, for he did not know everything yet of a woman's strange choices, but he was only too glad to have Rebecca accompany her father. So the next morning the three visited together several of the famous mines of Pyramid, and finally came up to the Golconda.

William was on very good terms with the superintendent, although he had never been able to make

friends with Sewell, the owner. The party had no trouble in gaining entrance to the mill, and they were soon standing in the doorway looking into the furnace-room and at the two mixers as they rolled steadily around on their endless track.

They had been standing there but a moment, when the Professor was attracted by something in the chemical-room close by, and stepped in there, leaving Rebecca and William alone.

"Tell me all about it, William," said Rebecca, as she stood watching the grim machines as they crashed alternately into and out of the roaring furnace. It was not a morbid curiosity on her part, but she had felt as if she had been deprived of knowing from William at the time he was convalescing, all about the accident, and now that her lover was restored to her, she wanted him to tell her everything.

So William told her all about it, and he was not unmindful of Francis Randall's part either. The mention of his name caused Rebecca to ask a question.

"Isn't he—didn't I hear somewhere that he was soon to have a call to one of the large churches in New York?"

"I haven't heard of it," said William. "He is in New York now. I had a letter from him a few days ago. Have you read his book, *What the King Said*?"

"Yes; it's a beautiful story. There was one part in it that made me think of our experience."

"Perhaps it was his own," replied William. "He

and my sister Jane—I don't know that I ought to tell—but I am sure he and Jane love each other, but they have had some misunderstanding."

"Oh, your sister Jane!" cried Rebecca. The two had crossed through the furnace-room, and were now standing by the open door on the other side, the door through which Francis Randall had stepped to rescue William. "Your sister Jane! Did I tell you she sent me the paper telling about your accident, but not a word of your recovery? And then she answered father's telegram and addressed it to me. Did she know about our quarrel?"

"Yes," said William; and he told Rebecca about the photograph and the incident that occurred just before he left home for Pyramid.

After that they stood in the doorway looking out at the wonderful panorama of mountains. The Professor was staying a long time in the chemical-room. It is possible he found the chemicals more interesting than the company of these two persons, who seemed to care very little for anything or anyone except themselves.

"What are you going to do out here, William?" Rebecca at last asked shyly, when she discovered that he had stopped looking at the mountains and was looking at her.

"I don't know exactly," replied William slowly.

"Will you keep on with the meetings?"

"What do you think I had better do?" asked William, looking into Rebecca's eyes and seeing the answer there.

"You are in danger," faltered Rebecca, "but"—

and the same old Puritan sternness of moral obligation showed in her face as in her lover's—"if it is your duty you must do it."

"I have thought some of going back to Andover," said William, with a pause.

Rebecca's face turned rosy red, but she made no answer.

"I must do something to provide for myself. When these meetings here are over, I shall be entirely out of means, Rebecca," William continued, with a frankness that she liked in him better than any other quality. "The fact is, my experience out here has shown me my need of thorough preparation if I am going to preach to men."

"Do you mean that you are going back into the ministry?" asked Rebecca suddenly.

William looked at her, and it is certainly due him to say that not even the possibility of losing the heaven he had so unexpectedly gained in Rebecca, could prevent him from telling her the exact truth.

"No, Rebecca," he said, and he was very pale, and his voice trembled as he said it; "no, I have not decided that I can work best in a church. But I do know that I have had grow up in me since these meetings began, a great longing to preach to men. If that is to be my life-work, I need very thorough and careful preparation for it. If I go back to Andover, I can finish my studies which I carried up to the Senior year. But I am still in doubt of my place of work when I am ready for it."

Rebecca had been looking at the ground. She now raised her eyes, and if there was a suspicion of

a tear in one of them it was not a tear of regret at her lover's lack of courage. Still she did not say anything at first, and William took her hand, there being none of the men in the mill looking, and said—

"Rebecca, whether I do my work of preaching in a church or in some place like last night, is your promise good,—will you share my life with me?"

"Yes," replied Rebecca, looking up at him and smiling, and this time there was no doubt as to the presence of the tear, for it shone on her cheek; "yes, I will go with you and work with you anywhere."

"This is a very fine view out here," said the Professor, suddenly stepping through the doorway.

"It certainly is," said William, but he was not looking at the mountains.

"What do you think, Rebecca?" asked the Professor, with a twinkle of the eyes that proved he was not altogether stupid even outside the realm of the minor prophets. "Don't you enjoy it more than the scenery around Andover?"

"Yes, father, I think I do;" and then Rebecca laughed, and after a moment William and the Professor joined her. It is easy to laugh when the heart is light.

CHAPTER XXII.

"THE MARKHAM UNION."

TWO days later, when the Professor and Rebecca said good-bye to William, and started back to Andover, William had talked over matters with the Professor and decided to return to the Seminary in time to begin the fall term. Meanwhile he would finish his meetings in Pyramid, and then spend the summer in earning money to help him during the Seminary year.

The last thing the Professor said as the train moved away, was, "Don't get shot, William. We have need of you in some pulpit!"

Rebecca did not speak, but she looked her fears and hopes. William stood on the platform, and his face was pale, he showed the marks of the excitement he had been experiencing, but his happiness was unmistakable, and he did not seem to fear anything now that Rebecca was his again.

He went back to his work that evening, and for another two weeks he did wonders. There is no leverage like that of love in the heart under such conditions as faced a man like William Procter. Matters also took a turn in his favour. The spring election came on. A new mayor was placed in

office, a man who believed in law and its enforcement. The paper changed hands, and the new editor came to the assistance of the movement to outlaw the gamblers; Mr. Clark, the Congregational minister, recovered his health and supported William nobly. The result of all this was a change of public sentiment, and at last a cleaning up of matters generally. William had the satisfaction, before he closed his meetings, of knowing that the reign of the gambling saloon was over, and that a large part of that result was due to his own efforts. But he always gave credit for all that to Francis Randall, who had begun the movement.

With the beginning of summer he found himself penniless, and with four months yet between him and the opening of the Seminary. He at once applied for a place as superintendent of a new mill in Pyramid. The mines had developed wonderfully, and the boom times was upon the camp.

He secured the position, and at once returned to his old work at good wages, with the understanding that he was to be released in October. And as he went about his physical work, ever in the chemical and mixing room, he saw Rebecca's face, and he felt daily growing up in him the most passionate desire to preach to men as his life-work. He identified himself with Mr. Clark's church, and all the teaching he could in connection with a mission started in the lower town. And he worked and waited, looking forward to his Andover life, determined that this time he should make no mistake, and feeling quite confident that somewhere in the

world would be found a place for him, even if he still felt unable to work through the church as his best avenue for ministering to men.

Meanwhile, Markham entered upon its summer life, facing a coming conflict with the saloon element that promised to test the strength of the Church Union that had already been so well begun.

In the first place, the organisation of the new Christian daily proved to be a task of tremendous difficulty. Naturally enough, the existing paper in Markham fought for its own life with a desperation heightened by the growing knowledge on the part of the editor of a combined church against him and all the whisky power.

But at last, in spite of all difficulties, the new paper was started. Every subscriber was a shareholder. The church membership of all the churches in Markham made up the great majority of stockholders. The plan proposed by John Procter and Hugh Cameron was practically carried out, with some changes of detail. Politically the paper was non-partisan in everything municipal. In national affairs, its columns were open to discussion and statement from all parties, and the constant purpose was to make all political measures of any party, honestly and fairly advocated, help the nation as a whole. In other words, the paper represented, politically, whatever was for the best good of all the people, and recognised the fact that there were good men and good measures, patriotic men and patriotic measures, in all the parties.

But on the subject of the saloon in Markham,

it was clearly understood from the beginning by every subscriber that the paper stood for its complete extinction. There was to be no compromise, no temporising, nothing but the complete prohibition of the saloon as an institution. The local election for mayor and council in Markham, occurred in the fall, and the new paper began, with its first issue, to map out the plan of campaign and agitate the question of local option.

The whisky interests had always taken every move of the Christian people against it heretofore, as more or less of a joke. The few lonesome voices raised against it in one church or another now and then, had never alarmed the saloon in the least. The saloon understood perfectly well that the churches of Markham were divided, and especially of no account in any combined effort in the way of votes. There was not a minister in Markham, before the union movement had begun, who had any influence whatever with his church members when it came to votes. The church member might respect his pastor, and even love him greatly, yet if the minister urged him to vote against the saloon he never dreamed of doing anything of the kind if the vote meant going against the wishes of his party. The fact is, that up to the time when the churches began to come together to overthrow the saloon, Markham had been run on a strictly partisan basis, and not even professed Christian discipleship had changed a man's political action in the matter of votes, when his own party was in danger of defeat.

The year's history, however, had done wonders for

the inner life of Markham. The "praying squares" had been a powerful influence to bring the Christians together. The Holy Spirit, who had moved so strongly the heart of Charles Harris and Dean Randall and Mr. Brown, had wrought His transforming upon many a business man and church member in Markham. The publishing of the new Christian paper brought men of different parties together closer than ever before, and made possible the campaign against the whisky forces, which now began to realise that something unusual was taking place. They had paid no attention to the church meetings, or even the "praying squares." But the appearance of the new paper waked up every saloon man in Markham.

It was almost ludicrous to notice the effect of the first number of *The Markham Union* upon the liquor interests.

A brief conversation between two men, who had property interests in saloons in Markham, will give some idea of the impression made by the paper. The two men lived in Columbus, where they had large brewery interests, and sublet to saloons in different towns, Markham among the rest.

"Noticed this new paper from Markham?" asked one of the brewers of the other, as he took up a number of *The Markham Union*, which had in some way come into the office.

"No. What about it?"

"Why, there's a new paper started in opposition to *The Markham Journal*. The queer thing about it is that it is run altogether by church members."

"That so?" asked the other man indifferently, as he lighted a cigar.

"Look here!" the first man continued, a little roughly, "it may be a more serious matter than you think. The new paper seems to have it in for the saloons pretty heavy."

"Periodical religious spasm of the churches against the rum traffic?"

"No," replied his companion irritably. "It's more than that. You don't seem to catch on to this. Every church in Markham, including the Catholic, is a shareholder in this paper, and every minister is an editor. Some of the best business men in the place are subscribers and supporters of it, and here in this first number they declare that one of the first objects of the paper is to run the saloon out of Markham. At the fall election the question of local option comes up. This is not just a sermon, or a set of resolutions against our business men. This is a daily paper, do you realise that fact?"

The other man waked up, and said shortly, "Gimme the paper." He looked it over carefully, and his face began to take on a more serious look.

"Say, this is no religious convention passing resolutions, is it? We need to look sharp. How much have we invested in Markham?"

The other man made a rapid calculation.

"Fifteen saloons, say an average of twelve hundred apiece. About twenty thousand dollars first and last. To say nothing of stock on hand and to be furnished. Can you run up to Markham in a day or two, and look over matters?"

"Have to, I suppose. The church people must have struck a new deal to get together like this. Suppose they'll vote together when it comes election time, eh?"

"If they do, it'll be the first time," replied the other man gloomily. "But if they can get together to run a daily paper like that, there's no telling what may happen. Curse Markham, anyway! It's always been one of our best towns. Lucky none of the other towns have been struck with this Church Union craze!"

"It will be all up with us when they are, eh?" said his partner. And then the two brewers were silent, trying to digest the new state of affairs.

That week one of them made a visit to Markham, stayed two days, and brought back a gloomy report of the outlook there.

"Fact is, we've got a big fight on our hands if we stay in Markham. Seemed as if nearly the whole town was solid against us. I went to see Father Morris, the Catholic priest. I heard he was trying to build a chapel adjoining the church, and I learned that they were pretty hard up, money coming in slow. I offered to put up a cool thousand or so on condition that he keep still on the saloon question. And—well—I came very near being kicked out of the house. You never saw such a rage in a Catholic priest anywhere. Somehow, the whole town seems changed. They say it's the result of their Church Union. Why, even the Episcopal Dean hobnobs with the Methodist and Baptist and other brethren, as if they were all alike. While I was there, one of the old men who

has been preaching in one of the little churches, died, and it was common talk on the street that the church would not call a new man, but go in with some other church. The millennium seems to have struck Markham," the man continued, with a coarse laugh. "I almost looked to see angels flying around the streets on Sunday. No open post-office, no ice waggons, no drug stores opened, except two hours, and then they wouldn't sell anything but medicine; no cigar stores or fruit stores going,—it was blamed queer, I tell you, by the side of what the town used to be. Why, they told me the hired girls in Markham were beginning to go to church, and sitting in the same pews with the people they worked for, so as to remove the social stigma attached to the hired girl profession! Bah! Give me a drink of something to wash the sanctimoniousness of Markham out of my system."

He reached out a hand for a bottle on the table, and his companion looked at him sourly.

"Sanctimoniousness is very well if you want to call names; but is it the sort that votes as it prays? That's all we care for. If it is, we might as well shut up shop in Markham."

"I think we might as well," said the man who had been to Markham. And he said it with an oath. "The game is up there, but we'll fight it out just the same."

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRUE CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY.

SO when fall came, Markham was the scene of a whisky war that raged as fiercely as any contest ever fought in the State. But the saloon element, for the first time in all its history, faced a solidly united church, united not simply to denounce the saloon, but to kill it, and actually drive it out of the place with good solid votes going one way regardless of all partisanship. Added to this fact was the influence of the Christian daily, which entered the homes of the people every evening, and soon became recognised as the champion of righteousness. The saloon men hated and feared *The Markham Union* as they had never hated and feared anything on earth. Next to the fact of a united church, they faced the fact of that printed thunderbolt directed at their unholy business. As much as they might have scoffed at prayer-meetings and sermons and church influences, they could not scoff at what was actually visible in type. Oh for the time to come speedily in America when the Christian Church shall have and own as part of its armoury in the battle of the Lord, this mighty engine, a Christian press, daily voicing the mind and will of Jesus Christ in the world!

Meanwhile, as summer came on, and the whisky fight grew daily in fierceness, other matters were shaping which also have much to do with the Miracle at Markham.

The event which the brewer mentioned to his partner, the death of one of the ministers, and the action of the church in deciding not to call another man, was in reality one of the most interesting events of the year, especially to John Procter and Hugh Cameron.

The minister who died was Rev. Alfred Towne, of the Free-Will Baptist Church. He was quite an old man, had been in poor health for several years, and unable to preach continuously. The membership of his church numbered some sixty odd, nearly all elderly people, scattered over Markham and out in the country.

The church building of the Free-Will Baptists was a fairly good-sized room, in good repair, and it stood in the lower town, near the factory district. In fact, it was the only church in Markham that could be said to be within physical touch of the factory people. Perhaps a younger man in such a church would have recognised his opportunity and turned the church into the channel of institutional work; but the Rev. Alfred Towne had been too old and feeble to attempt anything of the sort.

The death of this minister brought before the members of the Free-Will Baptist Church the entire situation. They were not strong financially. They were close by a very strange and difficult problem. They had few young people to do any work. What was the wisest thing for them to do?

It happened that about the time Mr. Towne died, the Salvation Army was having trouble to lease a hall for its meetings. Capt. George Andrews had, from the first, been outspoken in his attitude towards the saloon, and had often taken public part with the ministers of Markham in their temperance rallies.

The Army had been renting an old warehouse room which belonged to the brewers of Columbus, and was rented through their agent in Markham. But the fight against the saloon created the most intense feeling on the part of the whisky men against all parties who had sided against them, and when it was time to renew the rent of the building, the Army was curtly told to go elsewhere, and refused the use of the building.

The captain was an educated man of more than usual determination. He looked over the ground, and saw that there was no other place near the factory district that was suitable for his meetings. Then suddenly he stopped one day as he was going by the Free-Will Baptist Church, and looked at it. That was about a week after the minister had died.

The captain applied to the officers of the church, and asked if there was any possibility of his getting the use of the building certain evenings in the week.

The church officers were astonished at his request, but asked for time to consider the matter. At a congregational meeting the matter was thoroughly discussed, and also the question as to continuing their organisation and calling another pastor.

The action they finally took would have been impossible two years before. But who measures the

results that are possible when the Divine Spirit is a factor? That He had been moving through the hearts of the people of Markham was evident from what this one church now did at this crisis in its affairs.

They voted to give the Salvation Army the use of their church building every night during the week, and also to help in the work the Army was doing in the factory district. Already under the direction of the union churches, by committees appointed following the plans suggested by Procter and Cameron, a work had been begun in the factory district in which the Army and the churches were sharing the responsibility.

The Free-Will Baptist people now began by degrees to share more and more in this particular work. Gradually the members, after the church decision not to call a pastor, joined some one of the other churches, but continued the work among the factory hands, using the old church building as the meeting-place. It thus came about in time that the Salvation Army, with its company of enthusiastic, willing, self-sacrificing, but often uneducated and untrained material, worked hand in hand and side by side with members of a church who had received a certain well-defined and very useful training in a more educated and refined Christian type of living. It came to be a fact which the members of the church afterwards acknowledged gladly, that they had never been stimulated to so much real practical Christianity as when they entered into this union of work with the Army. And on the other hand, the members of

the Army found out that their work was more lasting, and the results more permanent and useful because a church discipline and intelligence of training were added to their own enthusiasm and zeal. There is no special good reason why a Salvation Army should do the work which the church itself in the early centuries gladly did. There was a feeling in Markham when the Salvation Army first came into it that it was able to do what the church could not do. In other words, as one of the members of the Army said one night, the church was willing to let the Army do its dirty kitchen work while the church sat in the parlour and dusted the fine furniture and polished the plate-glass windows.

The union of effort on the part of the Army and the Free-Will Baptists proved to be a very happy and useful union. The factory district problem began to be solved. The members of the older churches were heartily welcomed into other churches. And Markham took another step upward in real power because another useless branch of the vine was lopped off. If John Procter's statement that there were twice as many churches in Markham as it needed, was not altogether a prophecy of what was to be, at least the way seemed to be growing clearer for more consecration of church effort towards a common end.

In all this work of the churches, in their preparation for the coming election, and in their attack of the factory district problem, Francis Randall had a prominent part. He had been absent in New York longer than he had planned at first. He had

made arrangements with the publishers for another book, and on his way back to Markham he had partly blocked out the details of the story. But his thoughts were more than ever filled with Jane. Should he speak to her when he reached home? Was it not her place to speak first, or at least to let him know that she loved him still? But had she not done so in dismissing Mark Wilson? What more could a woman say without being open to the charge of a boldness which no man of sensitive nature could endure in the woman he really loved?

He was unable to reach a conclusion in the matter when he reached Markham, and so he simply began his church work again, but every hour added to his honest perplexity concerning the right course to take.

The second day after his return he was obliged to consult John Procter about some detail of church work, and after a little hesitation he went over to the parsonage.

He had, since his first return to Markham after his father's death, always avoided meeting John Procter at his own house, in order to escape the embarrassment of a possible meeting with Jane. But he thought of that possibility now with a more or less definite hope that he might meet her.

It was nearly dusk when Randall called, and John Procter was in his study. He greeted Francis warmly, and they began the discussion of the business that had called them together.

They had only just begun, when Mr. Procter was called out of the house by a summons from a sick

neighbour. He asked Randall to wait for his return, as he thought he would not be gone long.

So Francis remained in the study, and the dusk deepened in it. He sat in a reverie which deepened with the darkness. He had a strongly poetic temperament with all his practical energy, and in his thought of Jane, as he waited, he grew so absorbed that it was only when some words were spoken which sounded familiar to him, that he realised the fact that Mrs. Procter and Jane had come into the next room, and, ignorant of his presence in the house, were talk-about him.

"Oh, mother," Jane was saying, in a voice that betrayed great emotion, "it is of no use for me to hope any more. I killed the best heart that ever lived with my foolish speech about being tired of the shifts and expedients of a poor minister's daughter when I told him I could never make him happy."

Something unusual had stirred Jane that afternoon, and in a great breaking down of all her previous self-control she had come home and made a full confession of everything to her mother.

"But I am sure, Jane," her mother said, and Francis Randall could not help hearing every word, although he had risen to his feet and taken a step towards the sitting-room to let the two women know he was there, "I am sure that Francis Randall loves you still. He came every day to inquire about you while you were ill, and I heard of him many times standing at the corner looking up at the room. Young men don't do that on bitter nights, unless they

care something for someone. And, in fact, Jane, he told me that he still loved you. That was at the first of your illness!"

There was a silence of a moment, and Francis Randall would have given a good deal to see Jane's face just then. He stood irresolute, about on the point of making his presence known, when Jane spoke again, and he waited, with the feeling of shame that any man of refined feelings has, to hear himself spoken of by persons who do not know he is listening; and yet he seemed also to feel that what was about to happen would excuse him for the part he took.

"But, mother, it is impossible for me—how can he ever think that I,—mother—he is famous and will be rich from the sale of his book—what would he think if——" Here Jane buried her face in her hands, and Randall, standing there in the dusk, had a great light flash into his mind. He took another step forward, and stopped, for Jane had risen from the table, and he could hear her coming towards the study.

He stepped back towards John Procter's desk as Jane entered, and she, seeing his figure dimly, supposed, at first, it was her father. She had come into the study suddenly, with the impulse that had often sent her there for comfort when she was a little girl.

"Jane," said Randall, speaking in a low voice, but very distinctly, "I heard all you said. Is it true? Do you still love me?"

Jane was not a nervous girl, but this unexpected sight of her old lover, and his direct method of

speaking to her after a silence of several months, was enough to startle any one.

She did not scream, however, and as Randall stood still, by the desk, she did not retreat. Only she dropped her head after the first movement of startled awakening to his presence, and remained very still.

"I couldn't help hearing what you said, Jane," and Randall made a movement as if he intended to walk towards her. "If I understood rightly, you think I am rich from the sale of my books. And you would not marry me now for fear I might think you are marrying me because of my money. We will not count in the fame. Is that right, Jane? If I can prove to you that I am still comparatively poor, and not famous enough to hurt anybody, will you marry me, Jane?"

The man's voice had a certain mockery in it that was new to Jane's ears. But she was beginning dimly to feel that perhaps Paradise was not closed to her.

Mrs. Procter, hearing voices, came to the study door.

"Is your father there, Jane?"

"No," said Jane promptly. "It is Mr. Randall. He——"

"Excuse me, Mr. Randall, if I don't come in," said Mrs. Procter hurriedly; "I must see about getting supper." And she went out into the kitchen and shut the door. Francis Randall blessed the good taste of his future mother-in-law as he heard the door shut.

"You have not answered my question yet," said Francis slowly.

"You have not proved what you say you can," replied Jane demurely. "But won't you take a seat?"

Jane sat down herself. It is possible she began to tremble a little, and did not want to betray herself to him.

He hesitated a moment, and then came across the room and sat down in a chair close to her. Still, as before, he did not venture to touch her, although he was near enough to see her face in the dusk.

"If I prove that I am not, and probably never will be, rich from the sale of my books, will you marry me, is that the understanding, Jane?"

"That is not what I said," answered Jane, somewhat indistinctly.

"I can easily prove it to you; I shall be safe in saying that even if the book had a constant sale for years, I could never make much from it. You are a school teacher, Jane, and you can figure out for yourself how much I have received from the book already after the sale of twenty thousand copies at one cent and a half each. The book has already ceased to sell very much. In another year its sale will probably come down to a few copies. That is the rule with scores of books that are called by the publishers great successes. They have a run for a little while, and then stop selling. Even a book that has a sale of ten thousand copies is called a very successful book. At ten per cent. royalty, or at one and a half cents a copy, the author will not grow

rich very fast. The general public is ignorant of the prices paid to the average author for even a successful book. Jane, I have not received five hundred dollars, all told, from my book, and the probabilities are that I shall receive less than one thousand in all. Do you think I am—Jane—do you think I am poor enough to ask you to marry me?"

Jane rose to her feet under an impulse she could not define, and Randall rose also and stood beside her. There was just light enough left for him to see her face. A tear started down her cheek. She turned her face towards her lover, and the next instant he held her in his arms, and she was sobbing out something on his shoulder.

"Excuse me, Randall, for keeping you waiting so long——" He started his speech of apology out in the hall, but as he came into the study and saw how matters stood, he beat a retreat into the sitting-room, saying, as he did so, "Never mind. Our business can wait a little longer."

"There is one thing, Francis," Jane was saying a few minutes later. "I am a little troubled in my mind about something. You know I have said a great many times I would never marry a minister. Now that I have promised you all you ask, what am I to say to that other promise to myself?"

"I don't think I can help you out of that difficulty, my dear," said Francis. "In fact, I am going to do my best to make you break that other promise. It is better broken than kept."

"There is one way out of it that I see," continued Jane a little stubbornly to herself. "You

are not simply a minister; you are an author as well."

"Oh, fie, Jane! Is that the way you compound with your conscience?" cried Francis Randall, laughing. And then he added, as Jane looked up at him, "Minister, or author, or whatever I may be, you love me for myself, don't you, Jane?"

"Yes," replied Jane. "And I would love you just the same if you were nothing but a minister, and—and—poor—and—unknown, instead of a rich author making five hundred dollars a year."

After which unqualified statement, Jane laughed lightly again, and for both of them the whole world grew young again in the light of the best thing in it, after their winter of darkness and sorrow.

When they went into the sitting-room, Mrs. Procter was bringing in the supper in the next room. John Procter was by the table reading the evening paper.

Mrs. Procter came to the door between the two rooms.

"We'll be glad to have you join our family circle for supper," said Mrs. Procter, beaming on the two. John Procter added, "Yes, indeed, better stay."

Francis Randall looked at Jane, and Jane blushed, but was silent.

"Well, I don't know but I will join the family circle, not only for one meal, but for life," said Randall.

The next minute Jane was caught and kissed by her mother. John Procter sprung up and shook Randall by the hand warmly, and Mrs. Procter

greeted him in a way that revealed her thankfulness, and of all the people in Markham that night, it is probably safe to say that there were not four genuinely happier people at any supper-table than those in the old Congregational parsonage.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CHRISTMAS WEDDING.

FOUR months later, on Christmas Day, Jane Procter and Francis Randall were married. It was Jane's wish to be married in her father's study, because, as she said, she had found her lover there, and the parlour was haunted by the memory of that old scene in which she feared she had broken the heart of the most faithful, sincere man in all the world. As for Francis Randall, he would have married Jane in the kitchen, if she had preferred that place, and he was romantic enough to understand her motive.

So, on that bright Christmas night, with holly and evergreen and wreaths of simple make adorning the bookshelves and the one large fireplace, John Procter pronounced Jane and Francis man and wife, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And Francis Randall took his wife to the manse, and together they entered hand in hand upon that path which is the path of glory always, when it is marked out by the love which is the love of God, of one another, and of the great brotherhood.

On New Year's Day, a week later, John Procter received a letter from William announcing the fact

that he had decided definitely to do his life-work through the ministry and the church.

"I have reached this decision, dear father," the letter went on, "after coming back to the Seminary. I believe that I can serve best by being in line with the regular established organisation. Next June, Rebecca and I shall be married, and we shall be ready to enter any field where we may be called. I thank God for all the way He has led me, and most of all for the helpmeet he has given me."

John Procter and Mrs. Procter shed a few happy tears over this letter, and that same evening Mr. Procter answered it. A part of his answer contains some items of interest concerning the Miracle at Markham.

"You know something, William, of the condition of things here in Markham since the churches came together," John Procter wrote, after telling his son of his own and his mother's joy at the contents of his letter; "but you cannot fully understand all that has happened here without coming into the place.

"Of course, you know we won the fight against the whisky men last year at our fall election. The saloon is no longer a feature of Markham. We owe the success of our campaign against it in large measure to our Christian daily, *The Markham Union*. Without that agency I doubt if even the union of the churches could have won the day, at least in so short a time. The paper itself is a success because the members stand by it with their advertising, etc. We have some serious difficulties, of course, in managing the business, the political part of the

paper, etc., but on the whole the paper is a great power, and growing more so every day.

"I mentioned at the time the noble assistance given during the whisky fight by the Catholic Church of Markham. The relations we sustained to Father Morris have deepened into a wider interest in common forms of church work. It may be said truly that the entire movement which has brought the churches of Markham together to work for the common good of the town, has enlarged our common understanding of one another. We have not changed our denominational habits particularly. But we have learned of one another. And of no church have we learned more than of the Catholic here in Markham. Father Morris has worked side by side with Protestant ministers for temperance, Sunday laws, good order, and general moral life.

"The Episcopal Church in Markham has also gone through certain experiences since our union movement began. Dean Murray, the present dean, has never invited other ministers into the pulpit of Grace Cathedral as Dean Randall did, but, so far as I can learn, his people would not object if he did. Francis is at present somewhat in doubt as to the best course to pursue. He frequently preaches for me or Hugh Cameron, or in any other church here. But there stands the old church canon which forbids the Episcopal clergyman from inviting other ministers into his pulpit. I am convinced that time will solve this question, and the canon will some day be removed or modified. Meanwhile, the Dean and Francis work hand in hand with all the rest of us,

in doing common Christian work. Last week, in one of the 'prayer squares,' Dean Murray was the leader of the meeting which was held in the house of the Cumberland Presbyterian minister.

"You say you are ready to enter any field to which the Lord may call you after you have completed your studies at Andover. I am growing somewhat old and feeble in the work, and Hugh Cameron is still in his prime. We have been talking it over lately, and I have persuaded him and many of our people that a younger man in my place would do what now needs to be done with much greater results. It is possible, William, that this work here will call for you when you are ready for it. Pray God you may consecrate your powers to the work of His united church on earth wherever you may be called. I once thought never to live to see such a miracle of grace as that which has been wrought in Markham. But we live in an age of progress in every part of the scientific world. Why should we not expect as much progress in the religious world? The true church union is a union of common work for the Lord. When the churches realise that truth fully, and come together on the basis of common service, the miracle we have witnessed here will be an accomplished fact before the twentieth century has begun its glorious record of the triumph of the kingdom of God on earth."

John Procter finished his letter, and rose and walked to his window. This time he recalled in a spirit of wonder his feelings in that same study on the day his son had written him that eventful letter.

He looked out upon the town as it lay white and still under its cover of snow. He could still count several church steeples, though his own was not among the number. But he breathed a prayer of thanksgiving to think that now the churches of Markham moved under a common impulse for one purpose. Was not Christ's yearning prayer being answered at last? Were they not becoming one, even as He was with the Father? In the spirit of that thanksgiving he looked out upon the town upon which the miracle of the Spirit's power had displayed so large a part of its transforming grace, and prayed that the new year might witness in every town and city of the world the same miracle as the Miracle at Markham.

PRINTED BY MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED, EDINBURGH

CHARLES H. KELLY'S NEW & RECENT BOOKS

New Book by "Pansy."

Yesterday Framed in To-Day. By "PANSY." Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

At the Gates of the Morning. A Story of the Reformation in Kent. By DORA M. JONES. 48 Illustrations by H. J. RHODES. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

"Miss Jones' portraiture of monastic life in the Reformation period, and its court intrigues and tyrannies woven into an interesting story, indicates a mind of the Charlotte Brontë type."—*Liverpool Daily Post.*

Across Three Oceans and Through Many Lands with Pen and Camera. By FRED REYNOLDS. With 96 Illustrations, chiefly from Photographs by the Author, and a Portrait. Second Thousand. Imperial 16mo, 3s. 6d.

"Mr. Reynolds has produced a bright and chatty volume, and gives an interesting account of each place visited."—*Methodist Recorder.*

"Mr. Reynolds has religious and social sympathies which give his notes a special value to the serious-minded people. He writes with vivacity and an easy vigour."—*London Morning.*

Third Edition of the New Missionary Biography.

David Hill, Missionary and Saint. By Rev. W. T. A. BARBER, B.D., Headmaster of the Leys School, Cambridge. Portrait and Maps. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

"Mr. Barber tells with simple directness the life's story of one whom he knew and loved, and in his hands it gains a graphic force that must attract the most casual reader. Mr. Barber has paid a worthy tribute to the memory of a noble life."—*Yorkshire Herald.*

New Volumes of "Books for Bible Students."

Pitfalls in Bible English. By Rev. J. A. CLAPPERTON, M.A., Author of "Methods of Soul Culture." Small crown 8vo, 1s. 6d.

The Church of the West in the Middle Ages. Vol. I. From Gregory the Great to St. Bernard. By Rev. H. B. WORKMAN, M.A. Small crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

"A book of remarkable interest, which should be useful as an introduction to one of the most interesting periods of European history."—*Scotsman.*

New Volume of "Helps Heavenward."

Ten to One; or, Ten Looks at Christ to one at Self. By Rev. J. A. CLAPPERTON, M.A., Author of "Pitfalls in Bible English," "Methods of Soul Culture," etc. Crown 12mo, art linen, gilt top, 1s. 6d.

New Volume of Wesley Guild Library.

Depth and Power of the Christian Faith. By Rev. ARTHUR HOYLE. Crown 12mo, art linen, gilt top, 1s. 6d.

"Direct and pungent. This fresh and wholesome volume may be especially commended to young men."—*Christian World.*

London: CHARLES H. KELLY, 2, Castle Street, City Road, E.C.; and 26, Paternoster Row, E.C.